

The Nation.

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EDITORIAL

ED McMAHON FOR VEEP

Dan Quayle's attack on television character Murphy Brown touched off a lot of Pirandelloesque speculation in the political press. Is fiction overshadowing reality in Great Debate '92? Will Murphy Brown become the new Willie Horton? Is Dan Quayle real? Will Ed McMahon be put on the G.O.P. ticket as National Sidekick—sorry, Vice President—now that Carson is off the air?

Wait a minute. That's not a bad idea. If a TV character like Ms. Brown can become a campaign issue, why not cast one as a candidate? There's no one better qualified for the veep role than Ed McMahon. For the past thirty years, he's played number two to Carson, so he has a lot more experience to offer than Dan Quayle. He's also a nonpolitician—a plus these days—and he has no known political agenda, a lack that has been one of Ross Perot's principal assets.

Let's face it: Today's popular politician doesn't need a program; he needs to be *on* one. That's the strength Big Ed would bring to the ticket. He's now emcee of a program called *Star Search* and could take charge of the hunt for new talent to staff the next administration. He's also spokesman on those American Family Publishers Sweepstakes commercials, so he's strongly identified with family values and the American Dream.

Obviously Ed McMahon would be the perfect replacement for Quayle, should Bush decide to drop him. The problem is that the dump-Quayle scenario is unlikely because the Prez has this right-wing problem and needs an ideologue. Bill Clinton will probably choose his running mate the old-fashioned, ticket-balancing way. But there's a third candidate, without a V.P.—a man who was nominated on *Larry King Live*, who plans to run the government like a big interactive-TV talk show (see Ronnie Dugger's article on page 813). Who else but Ed McMahon as his sidekick? We can hear it now: "Heeere's Ross!"

HOT FLASH Katha Pollitt

WHO IS PEROT?

Alexander
Cockburn
Ronnie Dugger
Robert Fitch

FEAR IN ZAGREB

Slavenka
Drakulić

CHOKEHOLD ON CUBA

Saul Landau

CUBA TURNS TO TOURISM

Jon Glazer and
Kurt Hollander

ON BEING JEWISH

Ted Solotaroff
Murray Polner

LETTER FROM CALIFORNIA

THE BEST SENATE RACE MONEY CAN BUY

ROBERT SCHEER

Los Angeles

Somewhere between the riot and the H. Ross Perot insurgency, we have lost sight of the California Senate races, where twelve candidates have spent substantial fortunes trying to buy the two available seats. Evidently the voters didn't care. Local television reduced coverage of these races solely to the business of running the candidates' largely deceptive ads. The print media retained their pride by in-depth analysis of those very same commercials. The political corruption and the public indifference were inevitable. The very idea of the Senate treats California like a two-dollar whore. Here we are the eighth-largest economy in the world, with a major chunk of this country's population, resources and problems, and we get two lousy seats.

Why get all excited about Senate seats that represent 30 million people when you can look across your border at deserted states entitled to the same representation? A California senator just costs too much. As of mid-April, candidates running for the two seats reported they had raised a total of \$27 million, and they had almost two months of telephoning fat cats to go. This, in a recession year. It's all about money, and you would have to go back to Upton Sinclair's 1934 EPIC campaign [see Peter Schrag, "A California Epic," May 25] to find an election that was more than a fundraising sweepstakes. California is just too broad a media buy for any but the slickest and best-financed campaigns to make an impression. Political activists would do well to focus their money and energy on states where a swing of a few tens of thousands of voters

(Continued on Page 824)



LETTERS.

STILL WATERS RUN . . .

Grinnell, Iowa

My top preference for Vice President is Jesse Jackson. However, if *The Nation* is going to recommend women for the ticket ["How the Other Half Votes," May 18], I suggest we not forget Congresswoman Maxine Waters. She is African-American, pro-choice, a leader in the Rainbow, and from California (which has 20 percent of the electoral votes needed to win). She also supported Clinton (which means she should be on his short list) and could definitely intimidate Dan Quayle.

The symbolism would be powerful—and not just the unity of the white, male, Southern D.L.C. chair plus the African-American, female, West Coast Rainbow activist. By picking a Vice President from the very district of the L.A. turmoil, Governor Clinton could "let justice roll down like waters" (Amos 5:24).

If the pun is not as good as one of Kopkind's, the analysis is still valid. In a serious three-way race, where 40 percent of the popular vote could be enough to win the presidency, Clinton/Waters might just be the ticket to ride. *Steve Cobble*

NO DAM. GOOD.

Washington

I read with concern Victor Perera's article "Damming Ecology" [April 20]. The government of Mexico has reiterated that there is no plan to build a dam along the Usumacinta River. On April 2, during a visit to the state of Chiapas, President Carlos Salinas reaffirmed that his government "neither has nor will it build a hydroelectric dam on the Usumacinta River, and it does not consider developing projects for [a dam] either." Two weeks before, on March 23, the Federal Electricity Commission had declared that no "dam will be built along any point of this river."

President Salinas has placed a strong emphasis on accomplishing economic development with ecological responsibility. The protection of the rain forest in the state of Chiapas has been a constant concern of the Mexican government, and it has taken decisive measures to protect it, such as the addition of 55,000 hectares to the Montes Azules ecological reserve.

Had Perera paid attention to President Salinas's statement of April 2, he would have drawn a diametrically different conclusion.

Javier Treviño
Embassy of Mexico

PERERA REPLIES

Jerusalem

President Salinas's April 2 statement, issued as my editorial went to press, is welcome news. But the prospect of a dam on the Usumacinta is certain to rise again, from both the Mexican and the Guatemalan sides of the river. Salinas's commendable stand would have more resonance if Mexico were to take the initiative in

exploring alternative energy sources—including solar power—and place the issue on the table at the Rio Earth Summit. *Victor Perera*

CLEARCUTTING TIMBER JOBS

San Jose, Calif.

Peter Korn's "The Case for Preservation" [March 30] repeats lumber-industry propaganda: "The number of jobs lost in the timber industry because of habitat preservation ranges from 10,000 to 100,000." These jobs are being lost because the industry is cutting trees three times faster than they grow back, and it is simply running out of trees. Until the industry adopts indefinitely sustainable methods, all timber jobs are temporary. Preservation of habitat may hasten the end of a few jobs by a few years, but it is incorrect (and serves the junk-bond kings who own the business now) to claim that even one job was lost to habitat preservation. *Cameron Spitzer*

'STUMPS DON'T LIE'

El Cerrito, Calif.

Peter Korn's otherwise excellent article included an inaccurate statement regarding the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (U.S.F.W.S.) plan to protect the northern spotted owl. Korn referred to the proposed set-aside acreage—roughly 8 million acres—as "untouched ancient forests." This is far from the case. Although the proposed conservation areas include a number of untouched roadless areas, they also include many roaded and logged-over areas. In fact, our ancient-forest maps of the region show that half to two-thirds of the set-aside acreage has already been logged.

The proposed implementation plan is a major compromise. If it goes forward, the owl population will continue to drop sharply as many of the best ancient forests lying outside the conservation area are logged off. The owl population will stabilize at a much reduced level sometime in the next fifty years. The U.S.F.W.S. calls this a recovery plan, but it is a bargain with the devil.

The public is welcome to visit our Adopt A Forest offices and review our state-of-the-art maps, which were one of the main resources used by the U.S.F.W.S. to identify spotted owl habitat. The maps document the extreme degree to which our publicly owned forests have been strip-mined for short-term profits, and why we urgently need legislation to protect the few remaining ecosystems.

Seeing is believing. As the bumper sticker says: "Stumps Don't Lie." For more information call John Talberth at (503) 687-0277.

Mark Gaffney
National Audubon Society

'BACK TO THE FUTURE'

Southport, Conn.

From 1988's Seven Dwarfs to this year's Jerry-built pair of "survivors," there never was a

more inviting list of deserving Democrats—to snipe at. So it's baffling to find *The Nation* backsliding to the Roaring Twenties; and all to dispatch two of the party's best-ever presidential nominees, James Cox and John Davis, as "nonentities" ["Fed Up to Here," April 13].

In fact, these were men of great substance: both "gold Democrats" (Jazz Age lingo for fiscal conservatives), internationalists, social liberals—and just what the doctor ordered for the 1990s, if only the Democrats could reach back to the future and come up with a Cox or a Davis.

James Cox, while Governor of Ohio, enacted workmen's compensation, the minimum wage and the nine-hour day for women. He also pioneered a state tuberculosis hospital. His loyalty to Woodrow Wilson and the League of Nations cost him whatever chance he had against Warren Harding. He did, it is true, uncork the genie of F.D.R., naming the latter as his running mate. It was a Cox daily, *The Atlanta Constitution*, that stood its lonely vigil as the only major Deep South newspaper to tell it like it was in the early 1950s.

John Davis, who served in Congress with Cox, was Wilson's Solicitor General and Ambassador to the Court of St. James's. Many of his peers considered him the finest lawyer in America. (So how could such a man beat Shagpoke Whipple? He couldn't, of course, and the United States kept cool with Coolidge.) For many of his cases Davis accepted no fee. His last great legal victories were the Supreme Court's action overruling Harry Truman's seizure of the steel mills and, shortly before his death, the exoneration of J. Robert Oppenheimer as a "security risk."

Cox and Davis were towering figures, at home and abroad. Some "nonentities."

Noel E. Parmentel Jr.

Cox doesn't sound all that towering. Davis, who won the nomination on the 103rd ballot (over the truly towering Al Smith and the low-rise William G. McAdoo), made a fortune as a corporate lawyer (hence the pro bono work). But his place in history was secured by his most famous defeat: the unsuccessful defense of South Carolina's school segregation law, in the case ultimately decided by Brown v. Board of Education. Nice to see Noel Parmentel writing satire again. —The Editors

RED-DIAPER DAUGHTERS

Women who grew up in politically active (Socialist, Communist, Progressive) households during the 1930s, '40s or '50s, please send essays, memoirs, short prose or poetry with a self-addressed stamped envelope for a book by Red-Diaper Daughters to Ilana Girard Singer, R-D Project, 262 Scenic Ave., Piedmont, CA 94611-3417.

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EDITORIALS.

Next—McSchool

Having managed the financial growth of a center of elite higher education in America, Benno Schmidt Jr. is leaving Yale to plan the privatization of secondary and primary education—even pre-K child care—on a scale never before imagined in a democratic society. Schmidt's brief six-year stint in New Haven was marked by controversy over course cutbacks, building expansion and

a management style reminiscent of the Romanovs. Now as leader of a Whittle Communications "core design team" charged with creating a national chain of a thousand or more private schools, he claims that his purpose is to improve public education by providing a high-tech model that all schools can imitate. But Jonathan Kozol, author of *Savage Inequalities*, says, "This is the first nail in the coffin of public education. You don't help public schools by starting private schools."

Chris Whittle, the Tennessean who hired Schmidt, sees these "new American schools" as the next phase of his campaign

to achieve corporate takeover of formerly public education for his own profit and the enrichment of his transnational associates, chief among which are Time Warner, Philips Electronics and Associated Newspapers of Britain (Lord Rothermere's chain). The idea is viewed with emotions ranging from mild interest to passionate support by education policy technocrats, Bush Administration ideologues and middle-class parents seeking new ways to insulate their children from schools where the "wrong kids" predominate.

Although enthusiasm for privatized education seems to rise in tandem with contempt for government and hatred of "politics," Whittleschool will not be possible without the full cooperation of the federal government, which must find a way to funnel money (or "vouchers") into parents' hands or pri-

vate school coffers so that millions of kids can afford the estimated \$5,500 yearly tuition. Whittle is counting on Education Secretary Lamar Alexander, an old ally from Tennessee, to take care of business on the Washington end, where privatization is practically a mantra at Cabinet meetings.

But four more years of Bush is not absolutely essential to the program. Ross Perot seems to appreciate Whittle (he's an adviser to the Channel One network that telecasts sneaker ads and some current news to public schools in the United States and, now, Russia). And an Education Department under Bill Clinton would undoubtedly be technology-friendly, middle-class-based and entrepreneurophilic.

Most educators of a progressive bent despise Whittleism in all its phases [see John S. Friedman, "Big Business Goes to School," February 17]. But the point of Whittle's new American school system is not primarily education. Rather, it seeks to change the very function of public education from an institution that instills democracy to one that discredits it.

JOURNALIST SHOT: IT'S NOT NEWS

"If a white journalist from *The New York Times*, *Newsday*, the *Post* or the *Daily News* was murdered for his work, would it be taken so lightly?" asked Vicki Sanchez, widow of the slain Spanish-language journalist Manuel de Dios Unanue [see Félix Jiménez, "Trail of de Dios," April 6]. Sanchez was one of a panel of ten writers and journalists who addressed a recent gathering, sponsored by the Committee to Protect Journalists and PEN American Center, to protest the still-unsolved murder. De Dios was shot in a New York City restaurant this past March.

"We must publish more stories, call attention to these murders," said Warren Hoge, assistant managing editor at the *Times*. José Torres, the former prizefighter, who was the first Latino to write for the *New York Post*, recalled, "Manuel was constantly being threatened by drug lords and corrupt politicians. He knew too much about too many people."

Michael Massing, a freelance journalist, said that the murders of fifteen journalists in the United States in recent years have received little attention, because the victims were Haitian, Vietnamese, Filipino or Chinese. "The murder of journalists isn't rare in this country," he said. "Why does the press ignore it?"

Salman Rushdie sent a message: "The murder of Manuel de Dios provides brutal proof . . . that freedom of speech is no mere abstraction. Writers and journalists, who insist upon this freedom, and see in it the world's best weapon against tyranny and corruption, know also that it is a freedom which must be constantly defended or it will be lost. Those they write against—drug dealers, political tyrants, religious despots—also understand the power of free expression all too well, and go to terrible lengths to suppress it."

Jimmy Breslin, scheduled to speak, did not show up. No reporters from any of the city's four biggest daily newspapers covered the meeting. SUSAN SHAPIRO

Susan Shapiro is a writer in New York City.

Hot Flash

P.M.S. Postpartum psychosis. Breast implants. Breast cancer. Infertility. Bulimia/anorexia/dieting-for-life. There seems to be no end to the media's fascination with women's bodies. Thus, the last few weeks have seen a mysteriously synchronized spate of verbiage about, of all things, menopause: multipart series in *The New York Times* and *Newsday*, a cover story in *Newsweek*, a piece in *USA Today*, Gail Sheehy's new five-pounder, *The Silent Passage*, with Germaine Greer's *The Change* to follow in the fall. Invariably beginning with a tribute to upper-income baby-boom women—you know, educated medical consumers used to speaking out and getting what they want (right, like the unnecessary-caesarean rate, I suppose)—the articles move in swiftly for the kill: hot flashes, osteoporosis, irritability, heart disease, insomnia, migraines, declining libido, wrinkles and job loss. Job loss? *Newsweek*, the Backlash Bible (it recently published a cover story on sexual abuse of patients by therapists in which *all* the therapists pictured were female), actually unearthed a woman so discombobulated by menopause that she quit her "high-stress job" for something less taxing. So now you know why no women are running for President this year.

I'm not arguing that silence is golden. Clearly, it's better to have attention than patronizing neglect. It was fun to find *The New York Times*'s resident health nut Jane Brody recommending "a dildo" to menopausal women suffering from vaginal dryness (what's next: pornography? love affairs with actual human beings?). But with menopause, as with menstruation, childbirth and breast size, normal physiological conditions are being transformed into medical pathologies; symptoms that are incredibly rare are presented as typical; sociocultural explanations are slighted in favor of purely biological accounts; and finally, when women have been made sufficiently miserable and frightened, drugs, surgery, therapy and punitive diet-and-exercise regimes are offered as "cures"—in the case of menopause, lifelong estrogen supplements.

Crone or guinea pig? "Women Must Decide," warns the *Times*. Procrastinate and die.

The underlying message in the news stories about women's health is always the same: Whether it's raging hormones or aging hormones, women are the victims of their bodies, except when, as with breast implants and eating disorders, they're the victims of neurotically distorted body images—images the media (the same outlets that bring you these distressing health bulletins) promote. Challenged, for example, to feature full-figured women to defuse the media-created obsession with slimness, magazines now offer "more womanly" models: the same incredibly thin, tall post-teenagers, only with breast implants. I suppose the menopause obsession and the large market of "peri-menopausal" women will bring us a handful of "older" models: incredibly thin, tall, silver-haired, face-lifted beauties on estrogen.

It's hard not to read into the flurry of interest in menopause a kind of "so there" to fortysomething women, now, theoretically, in the prime of their work years. (No one, needless to say, is interested in the hot flashes of cleaning ladies and clerical workers, who presumably just mop their brows and keep on drudging.) You thought you could compete with men, you thought you could stay attractive, you thought you could thumb your nose at high-tech medicine. Well, ladies, the joke's on you.

It would be nice if the focus on female physiology really was what its promoters claim: a feminist-inspired campaign for research dollars, public education and social understanding. But that's only one strand in a mix that includes misogynous canards, unrealistic beauty ideals and an uncritical—and dangerous—reliance on experimental medicine. The obsession with women's bodies is unfortunately not the same as rational concern for women's health. You would never guess from the news coverage that the major killer of women is not breast cancer but heart disease, with lung cancer moving up to first place on the cancer chart. Of course we need more and better breast-cancer treatments; of course it's a scandal that few insurance policies pay for mammograms and that, as a recent study showed, surgeons continue routinely to perform the discredited radical mastectomy. But something is out of whack when women who smoke are more terrified of breast cancer, about which they can do little, than of lung cancer, which they can effectively prevent—and when one of the main reasons they continue to puff away is that they fear the modest weight gain often attendant on quitting. Something is out of whack when women prefer breasts of plastic and scar tissue to real ones of flesh and blood, as if their own sexual pleasure mattered less than presenting an image of sexiness. And something is out of whack when women who haven't eaten red meat in a decade sign on for lifetime hormone supplements about whose effects very little is known.

What's particularly infuriating about the medicalization of women's bodies is that it encourages a vision of men as the healthy, tranquil norm. If medicine and popular culture tend to see women in the old Aristotelian/Aquinian way—as deficient males, hampered at every turn by their messy, dangerous, cumbersome reproductive systems—they tend equally to gloss over the fact that men have reproductive systems too. Look how long it took for male infertility, and the male contribution to

birth defects, to be acknowledged as problems. And when was the last time you read a cover story about prostate cancer—much less one illustrated with a real, naked man?

Culturally, only women are defined, and define themselves, by their sexuality, as packaged for them by a sexist society. No one would dream of altering problematic male behaviors—hyperaggression and violence, for example—by medicating the entire sex, as is now being proposed, on much less provocation, for my generation of women. Men wouldn't put up with it, and I don't blame them. Indeed, when it comes to their bodies, the famously fragile male ego seems amazingly robust. While women by the million-plus have had breast implants, exactly *one* man has had experimental surgery to lengthen his penis; he made the talk shows, which is how I know. And remember Rogaine? It turns out that this "cure" for baldness—which supposedly worries and embarrasses men as a visible sign of aging—didn't go over too well with men: It required too much effort, cost too much and didn't work very well. The manufacturers are now shifting their target market to women with "thin hair."

They'll probably make a fortune.

KATHA POLLITT

NEXT WEEK

Susanna Hecht and Alexander Cockburn
on the Earth Summit



A FATHER'S ROLE

A father plays a role, says Quayle.

It's true. He surely should acknowledge

His own dear dad, who, first of all,

Was there to buy him into college.

And teach him John Birch songs and stuff

That Dad and Dan sang by the hour—

Sad songs of how the commies plant

Such spies as Dwight D. Eisenhower.

And teach him golf—yes, how to face

The terrors of the links unblinking,

At clubs designed to guard against

The threat of blacks and Jews and thinking.

Yes, Dad was there to pull some strings

When Vietnam got zapped by commies.

Dan stayed around the house instead,

'Cause children also need their mommies.

Calvin Trillin

BEAT THE DEVIL.

The Perot Program



Those who clamor for Ross Perot to lay out specific policies miss the point. The Texan has now published the justification for his presidential bid in voluminous detail, in a vast document officially known as his financial disclosure statement. With Perot the degeneration of American politics is distilled into tragicomic parody and raises the simple question, Can a billionaire with no party and no program simply buy the presidency?

The Perot campaign, now planning a preliminary \$20 million advertising drive to coincide with the Democratic convention, clearly thinks it can. A useful parallel to bear in mind is the semantic trend of the Latin word *suffragium*. In the Roman Republic it meant a vote. In the Roman Empire it meant a favor and, as things went steadily downhill, ended up meaning simply a bribe.

Just as *suffragium*'s career reflected the increasing weight of money in the Roman political system, so Perot's initial announcement told us everything we need to know. He would, Perot proclaimed, spend "all the money it takes." Carve those words on the tombstone of democratic practice. With Ronald Reagan we had the homespun populist backed by the billions of others. With Perot it's even simpler. His net worth is his message.

There is of course plenty still to learn about Perot, however much he may try to fend off pertinacious inquiry with bluff protests about the vulpine press. Take his plan for beating the drug problem in the inner city.

In 1978 Texas Governor Bill Clements asked Perot to help lead the state's newly declared "war on drugs." This became Perot's crusade, and he quickly mobilized a group of his corporate attorneys to rewrite portions of the state's criminal code. According to Todd Mason, who wrote an unauthorized biography of Perot:

He wanted pushers to serve mandatory jail sentences, stores to restrict sales of paint and glue, and druggists to report every sale of restricted pills to the police. He wanted wiretapping authority for the police and more.

Resistance was swift, among everyone from pharmacists to civil rights advocates as well as some Texas legislators, who feared prison overcrowding far beyond its already intolerable limits. Perot's reforms were effectively blocked until his lawyers agreed to drop the mandatory sentencing clause. But Perot himself would not rest, traveling the state and calling for decisive action to end the drug crisis. In the early 1980s, according to Mason, he met with Nancy Reagan and inspired her to launch the "Just Say No" campaign.

Over time, Perot's view of the war on drugs grew increasingly militant. In early 1988, the Dallas Police, which Mason describes as "an army of occupation" in the black and Latino communities, invited Perot to help them respond to a City Council order establishing a review board to prosecute police misconduct. It was in this period that Perot, who felt the "real

problems" facing police were those of morale, first espoused his ideas for cordoning off black and Latino neighborhoods and subjecting the residents there to mandatory searches for drugs and guns. By 1989, he had taken this idea to its logical extreme. "You can declare civil war and the drug dealer is the enemy," he told Nancy Collins on the *Today* show. "There ain't no bail. . . . [Drug dealers] go to POW camp. You can deal with this problem in straight, military terms."

Perot's invocation of such solutions is integral to his ideological outlook, which is indeed militarist-corporativist, reminiscent of Italian Fascism in the interwar period.

Former employees have testified to the strong military flavor of his company and indeed to the heavy presence of former military officers in his senior echelons. Perot's folksy style belies the fact that he pays as careful attention to his personal image as did the actor-politician Reagan. In Perot's warehouses in Texas are sequences of paintings showing the great man in various crucial phases of his career. One such work, distributed to a bank in Houston that had come under Perot's sway, shows him putting up his last thousand dollars to launch E.D.S., the company that made him his fortune. (Disgruntled employees pasted a pink slip over the \$1,000 note.)

In tune with this carefully fostered image of the daredevil, rules-be-damned, can-do C.E.O., Perot built up numerous contacts with military and paramilitary soldiers of fortune, who were mustered for such escapades as the springing of some E.D.S. employees from an Iranian prison (which simultaneously released several hundred convicted rapists and robbers into the general population of Teheran, though this does not seem to have bothered Perot).

Perot's ties to the political universe of right-wing militarist populism may be more complex and troubling than is presently supposed. At least one former Army intelligence officer who has done some assignments for Perot also has connections with the right-wing political cult/movement headed by Lyndon LaRouche, now serving time in federal prison. In 1985, in a speech read at a drug conference in Mexico City which, so says LaRouche follower Herb Quinde, still forms the basis of the LaRouchite antidrug doctrine, LaRouche said:

We must declare war, a war which we must fight with the weapons of war. . . . Law-enforcement methods must support the military side of the war on drugs. . . . The primary objective of the War on Drugs is military in nature: to destroy the enemy quasi-state, the international drug-trafficking interest . . . and by detaining, as 'prisoners of war' or as traitors or spies, all persons aiding the drug-trafficking interest.

The LaRouchite variant of Perot's proposal for "cordoning off minority communities" was most succinctly expressed in Chicago in 1986 by Janice Hart, then a LaRouchite candidate for Illinois Secretary of State: "I'm going to revive the spirit of Abraham Lincoln and General Patton. We're going to roll our tanks down State Street."

Gene Wheaton presents another important link between the LaRouchites and Perot. Wheaton, now a private investigator, had been a criminal investigator with Army Intelligence. He

ALEXANDER COCKBURN

became known as a "source" through his work with Danny Sheehan and the Christic Institute in developing their Iran/*contra* lawsuit. Indeed, it was Wheaton who performed a strategic role in turning Martha Honey and Tony Avirgan's suit about the La Penca bombing in Nicaragua into a majestic conspiracy (sufficiently shot through with evidentiary lapses that the case was happily thrown out by a federal judge, who decreed that the Christic Institute pay over \$1 million in court costs and attorney's fees). According to former C.I.A. officer Frank Snepp, Wheaton was introduced to Perot through Sheehan.

"Perot," says Snepp, "picked up Wheaton's investigative expenses, and used him to gather background on a Pentagon official suspected of narcotics trafficking." Wheaton also briefed Perot regularly on the Mena investigation in Arkansas, which has been extensively discussed in these pages. As documented by Chip Berlet, in his report "Right Woos Left" (Political Research Associates, 678 Massachusetts Ave., Suite 205, Cambridge, MA 02139), Wheaton also "accepted an invitation to speak at the December 1990 LaRouche antiwar conference in Chicago." However, his ties to the LaRouche crowd extend beyond this speaking engagement. Berlet tells my colleague Bryce Hoffman that journalists working with Wheaton have found in him a strong tendency to recommend LaRouchites, such as Herb Quinde, as sources. Berlet does not think that Wheaton is, himself, an active LaRouchite. He does believe that he is sympathetic to their cause and possibly supportive of their politics. Wheaton has described himself on occasion as a right-winger.

What is certain is that Wheaton has served as a disseminator of certain LaRouchite conspiracy theories. In his report, Berlet details how such misbegotten information—provided by Wheaton—served to corrupt Christic's work. He cites as a source Dr. Diana Reynolds, who had an opportunity to review all the depositions taken by Christic as part of her research for an article on the Federal Emergency Management Agency published in *Covert Action Information Bulletin*. According to Reynolds, "It is fair to say that some right-wing conspiracy theories were woven into the theory behind the Christic case." With regard to Wheaton, she states:

It is clear to me from the depositions of Ed Wilson and Gene Wheaton that the notion of a broad conspiracy conducted by the so-called Enterprise, beyond the La Penca bombing and the specific Iran-Contra scandal, has many holes.

...

It is curious that Wilson is a former intelligence operative, and that Wheaton, at the same time he was working for Christic, was also alleged . . . to be passing information to Neil Livingston at the National Security Council.

The fact of Wheaton's continued involvement with the intelligence community is confirmed by Sheehan in an April 14 article in *The Village Voice* by Snepp. Sheehan and Snepp, however, are not the only ones to fall for Wheaton's line. Other journalists with whom he has worked include Peter Dale Scott and Fletcher Prouty.

Perot's fundamental tilt seems to favor repression as the

best recourse in an emergency. He's a dangerous man, and not in any way that liberals should find alluring. If it is really true that Norman Lear favors Perot, he should have his head examined. Excited murmurs that Perot is all for gay rights and choice remind me of the fan club, shortly before he came to power, for the Ayatollah Khomeini as a man of essentially liberal outlook.

'Iraq-gate'

One of the more preposterous political soap operas now in progress is the "Iraq-gate" uproar. We are now being treated to histrionic bellows of amazed outrage from columnists such as the neoconservative William Safire, the neoliberal Leslie Gelb and the paleolithic A.M. Rosenthal, and from Democrats in Congress, to the effect that the Reagan and Bush administrations were friendly to Iraq and supplied it with arms, advanced technology and intelligence throughout the 1980s and indeed up to the moment of Saddam's invasion of Kuwait.

This is news? The analogy with "Iran-gate" is bogus for the simple reason that whereas the assistance to Iran was entirely covert and ran counter to declared policy, the U.S. tilt toward Iraq was public, even if some of the specific transfers were shrouded in secrecy. American assistance to Iraq in the area of intelligence was an open secret; U.S. credits to Iraq were also part of the effort to bolster that country in the long war of attrition against Iran. The United States was so forthright in its assistance that it openly provided naval protection for Iraqi tankers during the Iran war. In the course of this exercise the U.S.S. Vincennes shot down the Iranian Airbus.

An added irony is that from 1986 onward there was a keen debate among Israeli elites on the advisability of a tilt toward Iraq, with the Israeli General Staff holding the strong opinion that such a tilt was called for, given Iraq's hostility to Syria, Israel's bitter foe. Gen. Avraham Tamir, formerly director of the prime minister's office and also director general of the Foreign Ministry, confirmed in *Jerusalem Report* that he had met on numerous occasions with high-ranking Iraqis such as Tariq Aziz. In early 1991 he defended the policy—known within elite circles in Israel as The Concept—as being worthwhile.

The reason for this disingenuous clamor over "Iraq-gate" is not hard to figure. Three months ago the ominous possibility of a major public outcry against aid to Israel came with the disclosure, notably by Ed Pound in *The Wall Street Journal*, that Israel was diverting U.S. proprietary technology to countries such as China. There were also charges that Israel had sold Patriot missile technology. "Iraq-gate" was a swift and efficient way of changing the subject. Nor is Safire's sudden affection for Bill Clinton particularly mysterious. Bush has had the temerity to challenge Israel's right to dispose of U.S. economic assistance as it pleases. He has also demonstrated that his rebuke to the Israeli lobby commanded immense popular support. Clinton is as compliant a serf of this lobby as could be hoped for. And Perot?

Coming soon: Bill Clinton and Murphy Brown: Is he the father of her child?



BELTWAY BANDITS.

DAVID CORN

■ Eagleburger's But

Henry Gonzalez continues to show that some members of Congress are worth a pay raise. As detailed in this space two weeks ago, the House Banking Committee, which he chairs, is investigating the Bush Administration's prewar policy toward Iraq. A recent hearing with Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger did not produce many new revelations, but it was valuable for its disclosure of the mindset of America's foreign policy pooh-bahs. Eagleburger, an honors graduate of the Kissinger School of Geopolitics, squirmed a bit as he described how the Reagan and Bush administrations cozied up to Saddam Hussein, providing him intelligence and billions of dollars in credit. The point was to check Iran and entice Saddam toward moderation. And, Eagleburger claimed, their gamesmanship worked initially, for a gracious Saddam allowed the Kurds, whom he had gassed, back onto their lands, accepted U.S. advice on airport security, permitted the opening of a U.S. cultural center in Baghdad and took other modest steps. Moreover, Eagleburger declared, by following a "measured policy" toward Iraq, Washington was then in a better position to assemble a coalition against Saddam—i.e., the United States had to be a friend first in order to go to war later.

During the hearing, Democrats teed off on the values-free Bush policy of miscalculation and defended Gonzalez's release of classified documents, which contained not state secrets but state embarrassments. A beleaguered Eagleburger wailed that compared with thirty years ago, "We now seem to work in an environment of distrust rather than trust, of confrontation rather than cooperation, of accusation rather than fair inquiry." After secret bombing campaigns, secret arms deals, secret wars and the like, a certain amount of suspicion is warranted. Eagleburger, whose testimony was all too carefully crafted and qualified, did little to revive faith. When one legislator asked him late in the day if he knew of any country that had covertly transferred U.S. arms to Iraq other than Saudi Arabia (a deal revealed in the *Los Angeles Times* recently), he replied, "No, I'm not aware of anything else, but . . ." He paused for a moment—the few remaining journalists in the press section held their breath—and then quickly added, "No, I am not." No member asked him to explain his "but."

■ Fiddling

Official Washington remains clueless. Shortly after L.A. burned, while Democrats and Republicans mouthed platitudes about the need for action, the House Armed Services Committee approved a 3 percent increase in the budget for the Strategic Defense Initiative, bringing it to \$4.3 billion, and blessed the acquisition of four more B-2 Stealth bombers, at a total price of \$9 billion. By comparison, the urban assistance package approved by the Senate will cost \$1.9 billion; President Bush had originally asked for half a billion.

There is a disconnect from reality at work in this town—even among those who acknowledge the problem. When

Senator Timothy Wirth announced he would not run for re-election, he explained his reasons in a *Washington Post* Op-Ed. He assailed the effects of "concentrations of moneyed interests" on the Senate. He described the Senate as "an unsteady diet of petty partisan maneuvering, ego clashes and legislative ambushes mounted by single-issue zealots who can make the fate of liability insurance within the aircraft industry or the eccentricities of a handful of avant-garde artists seem the most urgent of legislative questions."

What was missing was any sense of the confessional. Practically every legislator takes a dive, and Wirth is no exception. He is well regarded for his consistent work on environmental matters, but he is also a leader in protecting the cable television industry from reform. When a bill imposing tougher regulations on that industry came to the floor earlier this year—a good bread-and-butter, middle-class Democratic issue—Wirth was one of several members who first tried to weaken it and then was one of four Democrats to vote against it. What explains his position? Look for a "concentration of moneyed interests." The biggest cable company in the country is based in Wirth's home state of Colorado, and cable people have been quite generous in supporting Wirth's campaigns. What's wrong with Congress is that most members, including the few good ones, have their equivalent of a cable bill. The cumulative impact is the Senate that Wirth decries.

■ Columnists and Double Standards

Much more odious than Wirth's self-righteousness is a recent emission from syndicated columnist Jeane Kirkpatrick, once Ronald Reagan's ambassador to the U.N. In denouncing Slobodan Milosevic, Serbia's President, Kirkpatrick bleated, "How quickly diplomats and international lawyers are misled by the likes of Milosevic (and the Ayatollah Khomeini and the Argentine generals and Saddam Hussein). It is difficult for the civilized leaders of civilized governments to believe that the man across the negotiating table is about to bomb civilians, wipe out families and towns, and break solemn agreements." Kirkpatrick's ode to naïveté is sickening. She herself entered government after catching Reagan's eye with an article that distinguished between "totalitarian" regimes (which were Marxist) and "authoritarian" states (which were pro-West and anti-Moscow). She argued that Washington should play *georealpolitik* and do business with the authoritarian tyrants. (Sound familiar?) Prominent in this category were the very Argentine generals she refers to above. Theirs was a brutal regime that practiced torture, "disappeared" thousands and promoted anti-Semitism. The generals had been shunned by President Carter. Kirkpatrick was part of the Reagan team's effort to win them back as anti-red allies. When she sat across the table from the torturous generals, she knew exactly what she was doing and with whom. Kirkpatrick's name has been tossed out as a possible running mate to H. Ross Perot. To comprehend fully the significance of selecting Kirkpatrick, would-be-king Perot should place himself on a rack and have electricity applied to his privates.

ARTICLES.

■ WHO IS ROSS PEROT?—I

Electronic Caesar?

RONNIE DUGGER

H. L. Hunt, the Dallas oil billionaire who was long a force in right-wing American politics, advocated, through his novel *Alpaca*, the proposition that the more money a citizen has, the more votes he should have. Now another Dallas billionaire, H. Ross Perot, proposes to create an even gaudier cashocracy in which the more money you have, the more of it you spend to elect yourself President.

As of the April polls, Perot, whom *Business Week* nicknames "the pint-sized populist" and *Time* calls "the plutocrat populist," was running first in Texas and neck-and-neck with George Bush in California. After Perot called time out with the press until he could figure out his positions on more of the issues, in a nationwide, May 13-14 *Time/CNN* poll he ran first with 33 percent to Bush's 28 percent and Bill Clinton's 24 percent. Billionaires are used to getting their way, and if Perot can get on enough state ballots as an independent he could win, despite the track records of previous independents who faded in the fall. At the least, he may well throw the election into the House of Representatives.

The central question for the American system posed by Perot's apparent candidacy is, should a billionaire be permitted to buy the presidency for himself?—that is, to pay for the use of costly computer and communications technology to sort out and organize the voting population and to buy the advertising and campaign workers that can insure his election. Implicitly Perot is answering, "Sure—why not?" His personal worth, according to what longtime associates of his have told *The New York Times*, glows between \$2.5 billion and \$3.5 billion. Early on he said he would spend as much as \$100 million of it—about \$3 out of every \$100 he has—on his campaign. Surely this illuminates for anyone to see the mother and father of all campaign-finance loopholes, the compound rule (a result of federal law and the Supreme Court ruling in *Buckley v. Valeo*) that no citizen can give more than \$1,000 to a candidate for federal office unless it is for his or her own campaign. Any American who has the money is perfectly free to buy the White House, four years at a time.

More than two decades ago Perot allegedly demonstrated his willingness to help buy President Nixon's re-election by offering to spend as much as \$50 million on his behalf. In 1970, according to notes handwritten by Nixon's aides that were recently discovered in the National Archives by the As-

sociated Press and other reporters, Perot promised Nixon he would give \$10 million to establish a "pro-Nixon" public policy research institute. Perot did not do that. Then in 1971 Perot asked Nixon, "How could I spend \$50 million for you?" Nixon suggested "the purchase of media," and Perot considered buying a Washington daily newspaper and ABC News, but once again, he did not. All during this period Perot was receiving favors from the White House for his own business. Perot denies that he made these offers. If he did, was not the \$50 million question the offer of a bribe?

Oliver North says that Perot promised to take care of him financially after North said that Reagan had no knowledge of the Iran/*contra* scandal. North believed, of course, that Reagan knew everything about it. North wrote in his book that Perot told him he should make a statement that "cleared" Reagan and also told North's lawyer that North should say "that the President didn't know. If he [North] goes to jail, I'll take care of his family. And I'll be happy to give him a job when he gets out." Perot denied North's account, saying, "Colonel North made up this false story." North and his lawyer stick by what North wrote.

In Perot's first report in April to the Federal Election Commission on the activities of the committee that is working to get him on the ballot, he began to demonstrate a comparable shamelessness about buying the presidency for himself. Of the start-up contributions of \$457,633 to the committee to get him on the general election ballot, Perot personally had provided \$409,823, nine-tenths of the money. The billionaire calls for \$5 contributions, as if to say, "I need your vote, not your money." This should not have surprised anyone, at least in Texas. Already Perot had ponied up almost a million dollars in connection with the race of Tom Luce, a Republican friend of his, for governor of Texas. When Luce, having borrowed a million dollars for the race, finished third and was left owing \$953,000, Perot retired the debt. "He paid it off," Luce told *The Dallas Morning News*. Luce is now chief of staff for Perot's presidential campaign.

Perot's prospective candidacy appears to be appealing to, among others, progressives who are disgusted with Clinton, the system or both: In the Texas poll in April, 38 percent of Perot's support came from liberals. Yet while it is true, as *The Nation* editorialized on May 4 ["Waiting for Perot"], that "no one can say what the Texas billionaire actually stands for," he has conveyed enough of his strategy to sustain an early judgment that he is well to the right of both Reagan and Bush on certain major issues.

So far the main plank in the billionaire's platform is his startling proposal to deprive Congress of its first and foremost constitutional power, "to lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts and excises." In a speech to the National Press Club in March, Perot said, "You've got to take away Congress's right to raise taxes. Now there's a radical idea. You say, 'Well, that means a constitutional amendment.' Fine." Under his plan the only way the federal government could get more tax revenue for any purpose would be to ask for it in a national

Ronnie Dugger, the author of biographies of Lyndon Johnson and Ronald Reagan and publisher of *The Texas Observer*, is writing a book on the dangers of computerized vote-counting.

referendum. Imagine the effects of thirty-second TV spots paid for by corporations and the very rich on a national referendum about whether to raise taxes. Presidents have already ripped up another constitutional power of Congress, to declare war. Without the power to tax, the legislative branch would be stripped down to just one major affirmative function, spending—and President Perot would want the power to veto any appropriation.

Perot also proposes to wipe out what is left of the federal tax system. "I suggest we throw it out; start with a blank sheet of paper," he has said. What does he plan to write on that blank sheet of paper for the rest of us? To date he has said little about that. Along with President Bush, Perot favors a reduction in the capital gains tax, which is paid mostly by wealthier Americans. In seeming contradiction, Perot appears to say, though vaguely, that he would be willing to raise taxes on the nation's wealthiest people.

He would subject both Social Security and Medicare to means tests. Depending on the details, that could well change these now politically invulnerable programs, which benefit everyone, into politically vulnerable welfare programs. So far Perot has not specified the levels of income or assets at which he would cut off Social Security and Medicare.

He has a few ideas that could be described, approximately, as populist: that elections should be held on Saturdays and Sundays, not Tuesdays, so working people could vote more easily; that officeholders' privileges should be reduced—for example, Air Force One should be replaced with a small executive jet; that former government officials should be prohibited from "cashing in" by leaving public service to lobby for foreign governments; that the proposed U.S.-Mexico free-trade agreement, which Bush is touting like crackerjacks, should be rejected or modified so that it will not transfer good

blue-collar jobs from the United States to Mexico. A leader of education reform in Texas in the mid-1980s, Perot lobbied successfully for the testing of teachers, the starting of kindergarten (which he conceives of as "early childhood development centers") at age 4 and the "no pass, no play" rule, which says that if a student does not pass classes, he or she cannot participate in sports or other extracurricular activities. Perot favors abortion rights and gay rights, and he sounds as if he favors gun control, although to date he has refused to support any proposals that would actually control guns.

But all of Perot's businesses have been nonunion, and his codification of the rules for one of them prohibited unions. In Texas he lobbied for a law that would increase the power of the state police to bug and wiretap, provoking the executive director of the Texas Civil Liberties Union, John Duncan, to exclaim that Perot and his ally on the legislation, the Republican Governor at the time, Bill Clements, were "behaving like advance men for the police state." In 1988 Perot was reported in his hometown press to be advocating a house-to-house, door-to-door police search of South Dallas, where low-income and minority citizens live, to "vacuum it up" by seizing drugs and guns. He denies the report now (he denies having said quite a few things others quote him as saying), but he did not object to the report when it was published, and the journalist involved, Laura Miller of the late *Dallas Times Herald*, stands by her story.

If Perot is elected and then succeeds in further eviscerating Congress, he might become America's first Caesar. Such a possibility cannot be evaluated confidently yet, but there are still some disturbing signs that bear on it. The Texan is superpatriotic, and he was a hawk on Vietnam. During the days of rage against Nixon for continuing the war, Perot ingratiated himself with the President by spending about a million dollars on broadcast and newspaper advertisements supporting Nixon's continuing prosecution of the war. Perot's organization for this purpose was named "United We Stand." Although he opposed the war on Iraq as a rescue of the Emir of Kuwait, Perot favored the dispatch of a commando team to assassinate Saddam Hussein. Under present American law that would be murder, and recently Perot has sought to obscure his earlier proposal.

Perot is alleged to have played certain dirty tricks. He is widely reported to have believed that there was a government conspiracy to block the freeing of POWs in Vietnam, and David Remnick of *The Washington Post* says that Perot once drew forth from his office safe a snapshot of a defense official and a young Asian woman, presumed to be the official's lover, which Perot said "completely compromised" the Pentagon on the POW issue. The publisher of the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, which had run a story involving allegations that Perot's son had used political pressure to win a contract with the City of Fort Worth, wrote that Perot Senior asked the publisher, Richard Connor, if he would like to see some photographs that proved a reporter on the newspaper had an improper sexual relationship with an employee of the city. Perot's tone was threatening, said Connor. Perot denies it. Perot does behave somewhat like a C.I.A. unto himself,



ILLUSTRATIONS BY D.B. JOHNSON

though: He has admitted that he sent his general counsel and two pilots to a prison in Missouri to check out the story of a prisoner who had said (but did not establish to Perot's satisfaction) that he flew Bush back from alleged secret meetings in Europe concerning the October Surprise—the alleged G.O.P. plot to delay the release of the hostages in Iran until after Jimmy Carter lost the presidency in 1980. Retiring Republican Senator Warren Rudman of New Hampshire, mentioned as a possible running mate for Perot, accused him of having a private investigator pry into his personal life. "He's a little ominous," Rudman told *The Wall Street Journal*. Perot phoned Rudman and denied that he had authorized the spying, and Rudman said he accepted the denial and an apology.

Apart from Perot's willingness to pay his way into the presidency ("I'm buying it for them," meaning "the people," he has said), his most radical idea may be his advocacy of an "electronic town hall" at which he, some members of Congress and some others (such as, on health care, "the leaders in the industry") would discuss national issues on an "interactive" national TV program. Immediately after each such program, people watching, using a device on their television sets, would cast votes on one or another proposal. Perot may well have in mind one national interactive TV loop in which he would be the main man with the main ideas and members of Congress would become targets of instantly generated and instantly communicated public opinion broken down into states and Congressional districts. Who would decide what the subjects and the good ideas were and what people would get to speak in front of the national cameras? Well, who would be in the best position to control the programming of the loop and to dominate the presentations? The President, none other, and most of all when the questions were war, peace and patriotism. There could be an instant vote on whether to go to war, impeach a judge or pass a law that might run hundreds of pages long. Perot's electronic town hall could replace American representative democracy with rule by The Leader, and a series of momentary mobs.

Some dark possibilities have been suggested in *The Dallas Morning News* by Tom Steinert-Threlkeld, who reminds us that Perot has deep expertise in computer and communications technologies and who reports that the billionaire's telephone banks, expanded to a capacity of 1,200 phones, have push-button options and that his petition committee has an advanced electronic switchboard that can identify the numbers of incoming calls. These numbers have been shipped to a database company and could lead, if Perot so chooses, to the amassing of "details about the callers' hobbies, purchasing habits, and other electronically available histories." Bring that same technology to bear, say, on people's votes cast in the electronic town hall and you have a new American system indeed.

Whatever else good or bad might come of it (after all, there are good Caesars and there are bad Caesars, as we know from Rome), Perot's election would signify the degeneration of the United States into a place where the wealthiest citizens decide what public questions the people think about and profoundly condition what the answers are. Already we are beginning to experience what it is like to keep running into this rich and arrogant fellow and his appealing but glib and evasive remarks

on TV and in the papers. Boldly, as if he is Ralph Nader or Jerry Brown, Perot exclaims: "I want to revise the system so that it is not so money hungry at election time. . . . These giant contributions that you can still make should be eliminated." This is like Croesus complaining that rich men rule the world. In effect, Perot is telling us that since millionaires are already buying the White House, we should just give in and let a billionaire buy it.

George Bush says he will do whatever it takes to win, but Ross Perot will *spend* whatever it takes to win. True, if Perot lays out \$100 million to buy the presidency, the people still might not be selling. But now he tells *Time* that he is prepared to put up \$200 million. If that turns out to not be enough, he can just as logically and legally spend, say, a billion, less than a third of his wealth, to persuade us to let him lead us. Surely, at 61, he already has everything material he wants. What better could he buy? □

■ WHO IS ROSS PEROT?—II

Welfare Billionaire

ROBERT FITCH

Twenty years ago, while I was working at Berkeley-based *Ramparts* magazine, reports began to surface about H. Ross Perot's Electronic Data Systems Company. Having just taken over the processing of California's Medicaid and Medicare claims, E.D.S. was charged with carrying out a racial purge, firing or demoting anyone who was black. As I investigated the accusations, not only did they turn out to be substantially true but Perot's whole elaborately confected story of free enterprise wizardry began to disintegrate into Oz-like deception.

Artful misrepresentations to the contrary, E.D.S.'s intercourse with America's private sector was fleeting and insubstantial. The subcontract with California Blue Shield for processing health care claims provided one-third of Perot's total revenues. Similar Medicare and Medicaid subcontracts in ten other states provided the rest. From his first Texas welfare contract to the time Perot's E.D.S. stock hit \$1 billion took only five years. How could a handful of social service contracts with state government agencies add up to a billion-dollar fortune? What kind of terms was Perot getting? Who was giving them to him? What did they get back?

Now that the entire country may soon live under the rule of Ross, the baying hounds of the corporate press have been loosed to sniff out his origins. Potted summaries of "H. Ross Perot: America's First Welfare Billionaire," the *Ramparts* piece I wrote in 1971, have now appeared in *Newsweek*, *The Washington Post* and, most extensively (albeit without attribution), in *Newsday* and in a front-page *New York Times* story. *The Wall Street Journal* predicts that the Republican

Robert Fitch is an occasional Nation contributor.

Party's attack strategy will focus on Perot's Medicare and Medicaid contracts.

But if Bush's operatives pursue their investigations very far, they will discover it was the administration of California Governor Ronald Reagan that placed the biggest and tastiest enchilada of all on Perot's plate. In 1969 the head of the California Department of Health Care Services, Carel Mulder, approved giving the Blue Shield subcontract to E.D.S. Then, a year later, he signed on as an E.D.S. consultant. E.D.S. got an eight-year deal whose terms enabled the company to charge Medi-Cal 70 cents a claim for data processing that cost E.D.S. only 28 cents. Federal investigators descended on Sacramento. But in what may have been simply a coincidence, the investigations were dropped after Perot's contributions to the Nixon Library.

It may be to avoid precisely this sort of contretemps, in which the hired detective discovers that it's the client who's guilty, that Texas Governor Ann Richards advised Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton to lay off Perot. Well she might. Any thorough exposure of Perot's operation in Texas could hardly fail to illuminate the doings of the state Democratic Party—the intertwining of multibillion-dollar welfare contracts and equally gigantic influence-peddling. Following this particular yellow brick road clarifies how Ross Perot today has a spare \$100 million to promote himself as the wizard who holds in his little black bag the answers to all of America's problems.

For its first five years, until Lyndon Johnson got Medicare and Medicaid passed by Congress, E.D.S. went nowhere, aside from a small Office of Economic Opportunity (O.E.O.) contract. The company was basically Perot's moonlight job while he worked for Texas Blue Shield during the day. But in 1965, the Social Security Administration gave T.B.S. a \$250,000 contract to develop software to pay Medicare bills. This appears to have been the worst investment in Social Security history. Perot quit T.B.S., took with him the program developed at government expense and has been selling it back to the government at a fantastic profit ever since.

How did he get away with it? It was James Aston, head of Republic National Bank of Dallas, who greased the deal. He was an influential director at T.B.S. Aston not only pressured T.B.S. directors to let Perot have the software, he also lent Perot money to handle the new business. Aston's bank received E.D.S. stock. Perot eventually became a director of Republic and O.E.O.'s most famous alumnus.

Perot's awesome power to get state contracts showed itself again fifteen years later, when in 1980 a \$2 billion Texas Medicaid contract was awarded to another company. According to *Texas Business*, Perot intervened with Governor Bill Clements and Attorney General Mark White. Within a few months, the Department of Human Resources Commissioner and offending officials of the Texas Department of Human Resources had all resigned. Perot's high bid was then transformed through the alchemy of Texas politics into the low bid.

Still, after all these years Perot has yet to make money selling anything to the private sector or consumers. His 1969 take-over of the investment bank duPont Glore Forgan nearly wiped him out. Unless you count the greenmail affair with General Motors—in which the company gave him \$750 mil-

lion to go away—wheedling money out of state Medicare and Medicaid programs has been the farthest horizon of his business ingenuity.

Someday, Americans may dare to reach behind the curtain of Perot's operation, just as Toto finally did with the Wizard of Oz. When they do, they'll discover that the confident, twangy voice they hear is just Ross speaking into a microphone they paid for, and that this particular wizard has no better idea of how to get them out of their troubles than they do. The sooner, the better. For as L. Frank Baum showed almost a century ago, people don't develop much political courage, heart or intelligence by sitting back and expecting wizards to solve their problems. □

■ LIVING WITH FEAR IN ZAGREB

Between War And Peace

SLAVENKA DRAKULIĆ

Zagreb, Croatia

“H ave you seen this before?” Drazena asks me, holding out a yellow piece of paper, a certificate that she is a refugee. “It took me two weeks to get it. Not because of bureaucracy—the procedure at the Office for Refugees is very simple—but because I wasn’t able to pull myself together and apply. I could not understand that I am a refugee, that this time it is happening to me and not to someone else. The war is in my country, in my street, and it seems that I just don’t get it. Even now I hesitate to show this certificate to a bus driver when I go downtown. In fact, I befriended one just to avoid that, to avoid admitting that this is my status in the world.”

Drazena came to Zagreb on April 16, the very last day it was possible to escape Sarajevo and Bosnia. The next day, her daughter Ivana's sixth birthday, the Serbian Army destroyed a bridge to the Croatian side of the Sava River at Bosanski Samac. “On the 15th, we saw a bomb exploding near us, blowing a woman to pieces, and that night in a shelter I asked myself, Is my daughter going to survive her birthday? But the very next day we were at a friend's house in Zagreb, celebrating it with a birthday cake and all. It was surreal.”

Zagreb is bathed in a golden mid-May sun and we are sitting in my yard. The city is buzzing quietly, as if there were no front line fifty kilometers away. I remember Drazena from before, the good-looking, self-assured young journalist and single mother. She still looks great, but in the meantime she has lost her apartment (“I heard on the radio that my house had been shelled,” she said), her job and God knows how many friends. Her whole attitude is different now. Quiet and withdrawn, she represents another dimension of the war, the inner change in the person and the city itself. If a foreigner were to visit Zagreb—and I doubt that there are many with

Slavenka Drakulić is a journalist and novelist from Zagreb. Her new novel is Holograms of Fear (Norton).

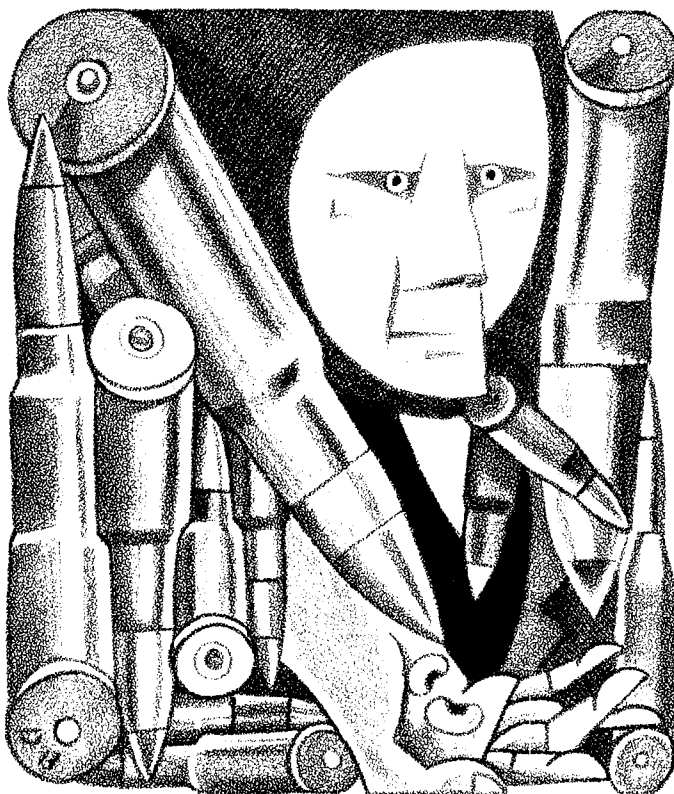
that intention—he or she wouldn't see the evidence of war. There are no ruins, people are dressed in bright spring clothes, the shops are stocked with meat, bananas, strawberries, perfumes, baby formula and imported Pampers. Sandbags still line the streets, protecting basement windows—the very same bags that were put there last August, but now they are worn and tattered and the sand is slowly trickling out, as if from an hourglass that is measuring the length of the war: It will soon be a year. But the streets are cleaned, buses and trams run on schedule and shops open every morning, as do schools, hospitals, offices. It is this normalcy that gives the impression that there is no war. But recently there have been two bomb explosions in the center of the city, and my neighbor says that her little daughter is terrified of the elevator: She fears she will be trapped if there is an air-raid alarm. In the post office, a clerk tells her colleague that yesterday her child ran home from school in a panic, because someone said that Zagreb was about to be bombed. All people talk about is war: It is already in our subconscious, in our everyday living, in our attitude toward life. Fear has changed us—you can see it on faces, in gestures, in a sudden glance, in small talk at the supermarket.

While I am sitting in my yard, talking to Drazena, suddenly I realize that what makes our situation even more surreal, perhaps absurd, is the fact that neither of us knows what we mean when we say "this war." Are we talking about my war or hers—ours or theirs? Or is it the same war for both of us? Until two months ago, "war" meant the one in Croatia. But now that Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina are two independent states, this question gets complicated, emotionally and politically. Drazena's war is not mine—but of course it is, as she is proving sitting in the middle of Zagreb. Bosnia used to be not only a part of our common country, Yugoslavia, but—more important—a part of Croatian lives. People came from Bosnia or moved there to live. They went there on visits and vacations and they had business and friendly connections there. Now those threads have been cut, along with telephone lines, roads, railroads and bridges. Then too, there is the specific tragedy of the war in Bosnia (but then, that is a separate war, isn't it?). We in Croatia saw it coming, step by step, the same way it happened here: The Serbian leadership and the Serbian Army prepared for it; Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic, aided by Bosnian Serb strongmen like Radovan Karadzic, used the same bogus tactic of claiming that an "endangered Serbian minority" had declared a republic. Only the Bosnians themselves denied it, virtually until the last day, with their leaders calling for unity and convinced that no one could divide a country where Croats, Muslims and Serbs live so mixed together that they call it "leopard skin." Then there is a political question: The Croatian government hasn't been entirely neutral in this attempt of Serbia to take over a large part of Bosnia; there have been leaks about secret deals with Milosevic. But what finally makes that war ours are refugees, 200,000 already, with countless more trying to join them. Because they cannot cross the Slovenian border and reach the West, Zagreb is full of them. You can tell them by their dialect, by their look, the way they stand on the square staring, doing nothing, just waiting. Some of them beg, showing their yellow certificate,

the same one Drazena has. Just today the radio reported that there are several thousand more approaching the Croatian border. How many? For how long? People here—desperate, pessimistic and poor themselves—are already saying, "We have enough problems."

As the war, both theirs and ours, drags on, it seems that our President, Franjo Tudjman, is the only optimist left in the country. Recently he joyfully announced the war was over—a curious thing for him to say, since he had never formally declared war. That, of course, didn't stop him from introducing many extraordinary wartime laws—just as it doesn't stop him from saying, for the sake of the upcoming elections, that the war is over. Besides optimism, Tudjman's other specialty is "spiritual renewal," a theme that has been warmly embraced by leading intellectuals eager to curry favor. While questions about what kind of democracy this government represents are, to say the least, not welcomed ("let's leave it for better times" is the standard answer), spiritual renewal is one of the primary tasks of the newly appointed Strategic Council. In other words, never mind democracy, i.e., establishing institutions to protect citizens' rights. Let's renew our souls instead—once we change our values and morals, everything will be different. Not much more is clear, except that one of the principal forces of renewal is going to be the Catholic Church, which has been vigorously pushing for a ban on legal abortion. It is strange, if not sinister, to embark on a national project of spiritual renewal in the middle of economic chaos and enormous social problems, and with the war still going on in one-third of Croatia despite the President's declaration of peace. One wonders if it is not another name for social homogenization and the silencing of all "internal enemies" and potential dissidents.

Spiritual renewal won't help us much to endure the reality



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we live in, this nameless situation between war and peace. Newspapers have been publishing excerpts from official documents on atrocities: A Serbian soldier in eastern Croatia poked out the eyes of a 10-year-old boy; another cut open a woman eight months pregnant, took out her baby and put three kittens inside. On TV, a Serbian reservist tells how he slaughtered an old man just because he didn't show his ID. "Like this," he said, sliding his right hand over his throat. "What did you do afterward?" asked the interviewer off-camera. "I just stayed there watching him for five minutes, then left," he said. People take such horrors differently now than last May, when only a few soldiers had been killed and there was still some hope. Now, we have been forced to think of these things as mundane facts. They no longer shock us. We've seen too much. We are getting used not only to the war itself but to the brutality of war, to the inevitability of atrocity. Which is exactly the worst thing that could happen. □

THE TORRICELLI BILL

Tightening the Chokehold on Cuba

SAUL LANDAU

Under the fashionable label of "promoting democracy," Representative Robert Torricelli is propelling a new "punish Cuba" bill through Congress [see Christopher Hitchens, "Minority Report," June 8]. "We have brought democracy to Latin America and we should continue to do so," Torricelli told me in his office last fall. "There wouldn't be any democracy in Latin America today without our efforts. Take Chile, for example."

"We took it in 1973, when the C.I.A. backed a coup that overthrew the democratic Allende government," I countered.

"The Chileans would have thrown him out anyway," he snapped. "Or, look at El Salvador. We're responsible for bringing democracy there."

I asked Torricelli just how he thought his sworn oath to uphold the laws and the Constitution conformed to his mission to overthrow governments he deemed unworthy. The Congressman responded by calling Fidel Castro a tyrant and declaring that he would help bring him down.

"And if your policy produces a bloodbath in Cuba?" I asked.

"We can't concern ourselves with consequences. That's up to the Cubans themselves."

Torricelli's missionary passion is directed toward tightening the already strict U.S. embargo on Cuba so as to, in his words, "shorten the suffering of the Cuban people by isolating Castro and forcing him out."

Despite recent polls showing that a significant sector of

Saul Landau is a fellow at the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington, D.C. His film The Uncompromising Revolution, on Castro and Cuba at middle age, is available on video-cassette from Cinema Guild in New York.

Cuban-Americans oppose tightening the embargo, Torricelli claims to speak for that community. This presumption has led to some dramatic exchanges with those Cuban-Americans who call his bill a "new Platt Amendment," referring to the 1901 act that said the United States had the right to intervene at will in Cuban affairs.

At House Foreign Affairs Committee hearings on March 25, Ramón Cernuda, chairman of the anti-Castro Coordinated Groups of Human Rights Organizations, called the Torricelli bill "a virtual global embargo against our people, to starve our people to death in the name of human rights, in the name of democratic ideals."

Behind the bill, and behind most of the recent anti-Castro legislation (including the funding of Radio and TV Marti), is Jorge Mas Canosa, founder of the Cuban-American National Foundation and the powerful Free Cuba PAC. Torricelli even held up one day's hearings for several hours because Mas Canosa's plane was delayed. Mas Canosa represents a handful of rich white Cuban-Americans, but he has successfully presented himself to Congress and the White House as the voice of the Cuban community. Politically, he has outorganized and outspent those Cuban-Americans who oppose the Torricelli bill and the general hard-line approach to the island.

A variety of liberals responded to Mas Canosa's adroit use of money and political pressure by endorsing the bill. Cooperative legislators and candidates have received substantial contributions, or freed themselves from Mas Canosa's threats to call them "soft on Castro" during forthcoming elections. As the Florida primaries approached and shortly before dropping out of the presidential race, even the ultraliberal Senator Tom Harkin endorsed the bill.

In the bill's present form (which includes a new amendment from Dan Rostenkowski urging the President to persuade U.S. friends and allies to support the embargo, and a new one from Ted Weiss allowing the export of medicine for humanitarian reasons), U.S. subsidiaries abroad would be prohibited from concluding new trade deals with Cuba. Existing contracts would be allowed to stand, but the parent companies in the United States could not receive tax deductions from expenses incurred from their Cuba trade.

The so-called "democracy" side of the bill allows direct-mail service and improved telephone links to Cuba, and it encourages humanitarian goods exports (food and medicine) to nongovernment organizations. The Cuban government sees the mail and phone provisions as thinly disguised attempts to stimulate more anti-Castro U.S. propaganda, and Havana also announced that it would accept no "humanitarian packages" from the United States. By allowing nongovernment groups to receive and distribute much-needed food and medicine, Castro would permit the undermining of his own government's authority.

Recently, Bill Clinton proclaimed, "I have read the Torricelli-Graham bill, and I like it." With Mas Canosa's blessing, Cuban-Americans contributed some \$125,000 to Clinton's coffers after his endorsement of the bill at a campaign fundraising speech in Miami's Little Havana. A *Miami Herald* editorial reported that Mas Canosa had told Torricelli's Congressional idol, Stephen Solarz, that Clinton's support for the

bill could unleash even more Cuban-American donations to the Democratic Presidential campaign.

When the White House got wind of Clinton's support for the bill, President Bush ordered the Treasury Department to "restrict further shipping to Cuba by issuing regulations that would prohibit entry into U.S. ports of vessels that engage in trade with Cuba." Previously, Bush had said he had "problems" with the bill. Key U.S. allies had vigorously complained that its provisions violated basic international free-trade practices and treaties. But after Clinton's endorsement Bush consulted with Torricelli and reached a "compromise" that the Congressman, the President and Mas Canosa found acceptable. Indeed, under the Torricelli bill, the President can refuse aid to countries that trade with Cuba or declare them ineligible for free-trade agreements and debt-reduction programs.

The United States has tried every form of pressure short of outright war to destroy Fidel Castro and the Cuban Revolution. The Torricelli bill continues that policy, but it would also impose U.S. policy extraterritorially by punishing other nations that trade with Cuba. House Foreign Affairs Committee chairman Dante Fascell, who privately admits that tightening the embargo makes little sense, nevertheless endorsed the bill (Fascell has since announced that he will not be running for re-election this fall). Known in Congress as a man of intelligence and wisdom, he could have quietly killed the measure in committee, and restored some perspective to the United States' time-warped policies toward Cuba. But like most on Capitol Hill, and especially as a South Florida member, he fears any issue that would put him at odds with Mas Canosa.

As soon as the bill is voted on by the Foreign Affairs Committee, it will go to the Energy and Commerce Committee and then, presumably, to the floor for a House vote. If opponents of the bill do not make their views known, Torricelli's mis-



sionary legislation will sail through the House and become law when it joins its Senate counterpart, known as the Graham bill. The Torricelli bill would certainly make life more difficult for Cubans. An economist for Cuba's central economic planning board estimates that the U.S. "blockade" (not embargo) has already cost the country more than \$37 billion in trade and investment. A Cuban government official called the new measures nothing more than a ploy to secure some votes in an election year.

Although the Torricelli bill and the new Bush orders will increase the economic pain, they will not cause the death of the revolution. Indeed, they will lead Castro to impose tougher internal policies as a means of stiffening the back of the Cuban leadership against the ever-present "imperialist threat." □

■ CUBA'S NEW ECONOMY

Working for the Tourist Dollar

JON GLAZER AND KURT HOLLANDER

One year into the new world order we sat nursing nicely chilled Hatuey beers in the Comodoro, one of Havana's newest, most luxurious hotels. A joint venture with Spanish capitalists, the Comodoro features poolside bars and a postmodern disco—typical of the new order in Cuban tourism. It is one that leaves the retro fifties look far behind as Cuba attempts to create a tourist industry that will attract international interest and investment. This effort is personified by the island's newest worker, the "animator," trained in the art of keeping tourists happy.

Our first encounter with an animator was with Didi. He was wearing a surfer T-shirt and high-top sneakers when he came up to our table: "Hey guys, where the hell're you from?" When we said the States, he slid excitedly into the lyrics from pop hits like "Down With O.P.P." and "She's Homeless." In Cuba's tourist sector, Socialist Man has been eclipsed by the animator, and we sensed the future spread out in front of us like the incredibly wide smile on Didi's face.

The very notion of tourism in Cuba can't help but stir memories of underdevelopment suffered under U.S. domination from the 1920s through the 1950s. In the 1990s, the government hopes tourism will "animate" a more developed, diversified and international economy, one in which Cuba will be independent of any single country as a primary source of trade or income. Most important, tourism is seen as a font of hard currency in a period of austerity. It is not the first time in the course of the revolution that this has been tried. In the early days the revolutionary government tried to create a less decadent and exploitative form of tourism to replace the most-

ly mob-run casinos and brothels. The U.S. economic embargo, instituted in 1961, squelched those efforts, depriving the island of its natural market. Havana's former hot spots became ghost towns, and apart from a handful of Russians, the beaches belonged to the Cubans throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Up until the mid-1980s, the contribution of tourism to foreign exchange earnings was relatively insignificant.

In the past few years, though, Cuba has attracted fairly sizable amounts of foreign investment—Spain being the largest source, followed by Italy, Germany, the Netherlands and Austria. The most interesting new players are capitalists from Cuba's Caribbean neighbors—Jamaica, Mexico and Martinique—which are now investing their surplus dollars where they might yield the greatest returns. The Cuban government has pledged preferential treatment for Latin American investors, and the recent increase in diplomatic and economic ties with them is a sign of a long absent South-South solidarity.

This new investment has had dramatic effects. In the past ten years, tourism in Cuba has increased by over 400 percent. In 1990 the number of tourists surpassed the prerevolutionary high of some 300,000, bringing in revenue of \$250 million. By 1995, Cuba hopes to draw 1 million tourists a year, generating up to \$800 million annually. Hitting that target is doubtful, however, without a thaw in relations with the world's greatest tourist exporter, the United States.

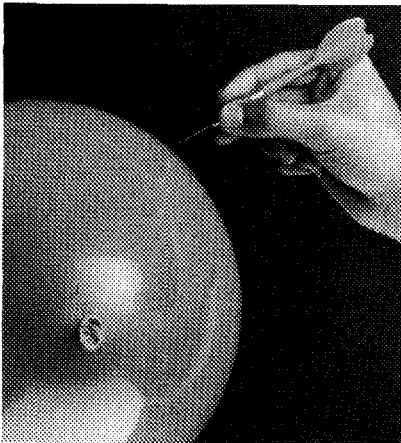
Meanwhile, the influx of outside capital and the concessions made to attract it are slowly transforming both the physical and economic landscape of Cuba. The instrument of this shift is the joint venture. Although the law that makes such investment possible was passed in 1982, the number of joint ventures was negligible until 1987, when Cuba modified restrictions placed on foreign investors, and European business interests became more active in Latin America. Now foreign hoteliers and other tourist developers are being wooed with highly favorable terms: no taxes, assured three-year return on investments, no restrictions on profit repatriation.

For these investors the political future of the island seems to be a minor factor. If the government should one day be deposed by pro-United States nonsocialist forces, the very people it courted stand to reap the benefits of a market that would expand to include the United States. For the government, on the other hand, tourism is a major factor in the economic future of the island and, by association, in the political success of the strategy of restructuring for which it has become the model. Already the changes introduced in the tourist sector are being applied to other industries. Last December the government partially privatized international telecommunications, giving the Italian firm Italcable a 50 percent stake in a new company set up to improve and manage long-distance telephone service.

Off the southern Caribbean coast of Cuba lies Cayo Largo, a tiny island rimmed by barrier reefs, its beachfront dotted with about a half-dozen hotels and bungalows. U.S. firms began building resorts on the island in 1957, but the revolution brought construction to a close before a single tourist had arrived. The island still relies on the original G.E. electrical generator brought over from the United States. Ten years ago

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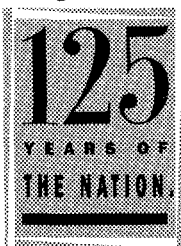
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the Cubans slowly began to develop the island, and currently it is the site of vigorous tourist expansion. On the Sunshine Channel, a cable TV station available only in hotels, commercials advertise daily excursions to the pleasures of Cayo Largo. This is what might be called "offshore tourism." The only Cubans allowed on the island are the workers, including several animators, who attend to the seaside needs of the tourists. While exclusionary, such tourism offers cash-flow benefits without disrupting or displacing the local population. On the island itself, most of which is virgin territory, expansion has proceeded within strict ecological limits that protect the reefs and wildlife. Tourists are herded together around the resorts and the ocean attractions. On our snorkeling outing, we were surrounded by at least fifteen large Germans.

'Tourist apartheid' is the direct result of a two-currency economy.

The Cohiba, a twenty-story hotel under construction in Havana, represents the more problematic "inshore tourism." Located in the residential section of Vedado, its towering form blocks the ocean view of hundreds of small houses. Against the Havana skyline—a blend of Spanish colonial styling and fifties Americana—the Cohiba's postmodern European design is jarring. At ground level the hotel stands in even more conspicuous contrast to the dark and noncommercial streets surrounding it. Tourists, it seems, are meant to do all their eating, shopping and relaxing within this plush fortress or at the adjacent Riviera hotel, rather than within the neighborhood.

Both Cayo Largo and the Cohiba are projects of Cubanacan, one of two enterprises set up by the Cuban government to manage foreign investments in tourism. It was the creation of Cubanacan in 1987 that institutionally enshrined the joint venture as a Cuban reality. Cubanacan handles projects in which the foreign investor can own up to 50 percent of a particular resort or hotel. Originally, Cubanacan was fully capitalized by the government, but now it is said to be at least partially foreign owned. In some future projects foreign firms will be granted majority ownership, a first in revolutionary Cuban history.

The second of the two enterprises, Gaviota, represents a more radical departure in economic policy and is perhaps most emblematic of the changes occurring in Cuba. Approximately half-Cuban and half-foreign in ownership, Gaviota develops its own projects—which are far more specialized than those of Cubanacan—and pays out profits in dollars. The talk of "marketing" in the office is more foreign still.

Gaviota administers one of the fastest-growing areas of tourism in Cuba: health-related tourism. Its spas and health resorts, most of them luxury models, offer "stress breaks" to wealthy foreign clients. Gaviota also provides those who so desire the advanced medical technology for which Cuba is celebrated worldwide. Many foreigners travel to Cuba spe-

cifically for eye, open-heart or plastic surgery, both for the high-quality treatment, unavailable in most Third World countries, and for the affordable prices.

With this form of tourism, Cuba's developed technology is utilized and integrated into its tourist industry, thus generating multiplier effects while encouraging further advancements in the medical sector. The country's manufacturing production systems are also being coordinated with construction developments. For instance, all the furniture in the Hotel Santiago de Cuba, the revolution's first five-star hotel, which recently opened, is proudly described as being made in Cuba. This is a rarity in the Caribbean, where on average 60 percent of the materials used in the tourist industry are imported and tourism generally fails to stimulate domestic production and sustainable development. Economic integration is not without its risks, though. High-technology medical equipment and highly skilled health workers and doctors might be increasingly employed for the service of tourists, undermining the quality of health care available to Cubans.

Employees hired by Gaviota are more selectively chosen, better trained and more highly paid than those of Cubanacan or the state-owned tourist enterprise, Intur. They also have less job protection. As part of the investment incentive package, investors are allowed to import foreign management teams—Germans are much sought after—to supervise Cuban workers in various hotels and resorts. Cuban officials say that this departure from socialist labor practices—permitting foreigners to create jobs like that of the animator and to train and discipline those workers—is necessary to reverse the "once and never again" syndrome, where poor service discouraged return visits. Likewise, they say that a system unofficially called "tourist apartheid," a phenomenon in which Cubans are effectively blocked from various stores, bars, beaches and restaurants, is unavoidable under conditions of scarcity. They insist that sacrifices made for the sake of tourists today will pay off in developments for the entire population tomorrow.

In a way, Cuba is improvising on an exclusionary system typical of island tourist economies everywhere, especially in the Caribbean. On neighboring capitalist islands locals often cannot afford tourist privileges, and many beloved beaches are closed to them. In Cuba, tourist apartheid is the direct result of a two-currency economy, with dollars for foreigners and Cuban pesos for the vast majority of locals. This is creating its own social distortions.

For many young Cubans, tourists with dollars provide the only access to certain goods and entertainments. In and around the clubs and hotels, Cuban women sit with tourists or stand apart in postures of availability. At first glance it might seem that Havana is teeming with prostitutes, and in fact direct cash exchanges for sex are becoming increasingly common. But more familiar is a practice akin to that plied by old-time dance-hall girls—women offering their company, their conversation, their charm, in return for a pricey meal, a night of drinks and dancing or a chance to shop at the dollar stores. Beyond the hotels, on the streets and squares, young, mostly black men called *jineteros* (jockeys) work in the underground economy, selling illegally obtained cigars and other

goods and changing pesos for dollars at up to twenty times the official rate. Unlike the young women, many of the *jineteros* we talked to in Havana survive, in whole or in part, on illicit market activity. Almost all of them complained about Cuban socialism and said they would leave the country if they could.

The black market has existed in Cuba for years, but the volume of tourists and the shortages of consumer goods available to locals have created unprecedented levels of unofficial activity. A widening segment of society, including individuals who previously criticized the black market as counterrevolutionary, now depends upon it for goods that are virtually impossible to get otherwise—for instance, cigarettes. This inevitably affects the social conscience and consciousness of Cubans. The boom in black market activity has prompted police crackdowns, most recently in an operation called Cascabel, or Rattlesnake. Citizens are being armed to protect “important economic sites” from burglary, and street thefts are rising. These developments threaten to undercut Cuba’s ability to offer tourists a safe and secure Caribbean vacation, one of the greatest advantages Cuba has over the other Caribbean islands.

Although there is no mention of tourist apartheid in the Cuban media, workers in the industry, from taxi drivers to hotel managers, are quite open on the subject. Our various conversations led us to the Center for Tourist Studies. The center, located in a bleak Havana neighborhood off the holiday-maker’s trail, researches tourist development and trains students for the industry. Its small library features American hotel management textbooks from the 1970s, a guide to napkin folding and a tract on Marxist-Leninist aesthetics. We talked with one of the students about the growing number of prostitutes and *jineteros*. She sympathized with their predicament and expressed a faith in tourism’s triggering effect to improve Cuba’s economy and eventually reduce the pressures on individuals who engage in illegal trades. She insisted there was no contradiction between socialism and the provision of a quality tourist service.

While at the Center for Tourist Studies we perused research papers from a conference it had sponsored recently on tourism and Cuban culture. Some of these called for the elimination of the dual currency to counter tourist apartheid. A single currency would allow Cubans to buy any goods or enter any establishment if they had enough money. There would still be a division between foreign and domestic tourist activity, but it would be based on purchasing power and not on discrimination against Cuba’s own people.

The government resists this option for a variety of practical and ideological reasons. Foremost, such a practice would represent a dramatic change from the government’s traditional control over consumer buying patterns to meet economic policy goals of growth and equity. The government is also uncomfortable with using market mechanisms, in this case higher prices or taxes, to curtail domestic demand for foreign and luxury goods. Meanwhile, the dual currency is disdained by the locals and considered an insult to foreigners who must convert their national currency into U.S. dollars before going to Cuba.

Although it has taken a definitive stand on the currency issue, the government has essentially abdicated all other key tourist development questions to its semi-autonomous enterprises. These in turn proceed without any overall strategy. Yet the form of tourism that the government endorses—one that will benefit Cubans—presupposes a guiding political force and a plan. As the government loses its vanguard role in this now vital sector of the economy, it is relegated to acting as a kind of police force maintaining a favorable investment climate. Rather than making a radical response to Cuba’s economic crisis, one entailing a deeper level of ideological soul-searching, the government seems comfortable with letting Cubans like Didi play the subservient worker role in the international division of labor, while at the same time prohibiting them from being owners in the Cuban economy. Cubans thus enjoy neither the accumulative benefits of capitalism nor the input into the social process characteristic of the best aspects of Cuban socialism. By not permitting market activity within the domestic economy while selling off chunks of the island to foreign investors, the government has taken a path that benefits those who least support the revolution.

Tourism might be providing much-needed liquidity, but it is not a solid foundation on which to build an economic recovery, especially as it relies on foreign investment to trickle down to the population. An alternative strategy would instead increase participation of the Cuban people. Here the government could begin by engaging a public debate on how to develop a form of tourism that does not come at the expense and exclusion of Cubans. This debate could then extend to the larger issue of how to integrate market activity into a socialist country in a way that preserves the gains of the revolution. The absence of such an internal discussion will not forestall difficult choices; it will simply mean that such choices



will be made for Cuba by the more powerful forces of international capital.

Before we left the Comodoro, Didi told us the story of the Hatuey beer's namesake, a fifteenth-century Indian insurrectionist. Fixing to burn him at the stake, his Spanish captors extended him the choice of converting to Christianity and ascending to Heaven or going unrepentantly to Hell. Gathering that his executioners expected to go to Heaven, Hatuey sensibly chose the alternative. □

Senate Race

(Continued From Front Cover)

matters. There are plenty of places where you can buy the electorate for a small fraction of the \$4 million that liberal Democrat Mel Levine budgeted to spend on TV ads in the last three weeks of the campaign.

Too cynical? Maybe I'm wrong and it is important. If the Democrats hadn't controlled the Senate these last twelve years, the Supreme Court might have moved sharply to the right. The contests for the two California seats up for grabs offer choices extending from crazed right-wingers to enlightened liberals. These campaigns have "lesser evil" writ large across the junk mail pouring into California homes at its usual torrential rate. Just the sort of choice that will allow my friends, the same ones who hide my cigars, to wake me early on Election Day and demand that I go vote when I don't really want to.

These are the same folks who used to insist that I had a moral obligation to vote for Alan Cranston four times despite his championing of the B-1 bomber, defined in Pentagon briefings as a post-nuclear war attack weapon. It turns out that was one of his more innocent causes. Cranston can't be with us this time. That cadaver of a man, who earnestly believed that jogging promised political immortality, fell to political immorality. Cranston, who started political life with the United World Federalists and the grass-roots California Democratic Clubs, ended it on the take from major S&L sleazoid Charles Keating.

The race in the Democratic primary to succeed Cranston has been dominated by Lieut. Gov. Leo McCarthy—who is not running as strongly as expected, meaning his funding sources are depressed after a failed run for the governorship—and two Representatives, Mel Levine and Barbara Boxer. All three are predictable liberals, although Levine is now in full flight from the label. In the aftermath of what KPFFK, the listener-supported radio station that is my media drug of choice, insists on calling "the rebellion," Levine has become a big law-and-order maven blitzing the commercial airwaves with ads that make him look like Daryl Gates before the fall. "A democratic society can't tolerate mob rule," Levine says in a thirty-second spot rushed out for the L.A. market. In a mailer intended to raise a quick \$500,000, Levine cites an en-

dorsement from a state police organization and pointedly ignores any social causes of the riot.

Boxer is the only serious bearer of the liberal standard on this issue. In Los Angeles she had the guts to say days after the riot that "we finally saw the thousand points of light that George Bush has been talking about, but unfortunately, they were the fires lit up by a decade of neglect." A fairly obvious statement but not one that Democratic candidates in California are inclined to make. McCarthy does support more social spending for urban areas, and like Boxer he backs City Charter Amendment F, which would strengthen political control over the police. That proposal, which came out of the Christopher Commission investigation of the L.A.P.D., is backed by almost everyone in town, from corporate executives to the A.C.L.U. Mel Levine abstained until the last minute, when polls showed the amendment had overwhelming support.

The other "positioning issue" for Levine involves trumpeting his support for Bush in the Gulf War. The enthusiasm of his ads has not been mitigated in the slightest by the revelations in the *Los Angeles Times* that the President had done so much to nurture Saddam Hussein's military power. Levine is part of the awesome Henry Waxman-Howard Berman machine that does not like to lose and finds political consistency, at election time, largely in unquestioned support for Israel. Between elections they form a fairly well-intentioned and effective Congressional delegation representing the more affluent portions of Los Angeles.

Levine, whom I've known over the years as a nice enough fellow, lost me when he pounced on Boxer, his liberal colleague from the House, over the check-bouncing fiasco, which ensnared her as it would anyone who's not independently wealthy. What does he know about needing to kite a check? Levine was, in effect, given a no-bounce checking account practically at birth; his father was a founder of City National Bank of Beverly Hills. I may be alone in finding check-bouncing to be a singular point of identity that I have with members of Congress.

Vying for the Cranston seat on the Republican side, we have right-wing television commentator Bruce Herschensohn and Representative Tom Campbell, who is the darling of the moderate Silicon Valley Republican faction led by David Packard, co-founder of Hewlett-Packard. Campbell is a fiscal conservative who is very liberal on social issues. Herschensohn's ads attack Campbell for his 85 percent A.C.L.U. approval rating and for his record on the environment. When the League of Conservation Voters gave Campbell a "top rating" and called Herschensohn "enthusiastically anti-environmental," the TV commentator called environmental leaders "kooks."

Finally, there is Cher's ex-husband, Sonny Bono, but the last time I saw him he was trying to catch Jesse Jackson's coat-tails on a tour of the riot area, which is about as forlorn as a Republican can get.

The other Senate seat became available when moderate Republican Pete Wilson was elected Governor, a post in which he has proved to be very conservative. Still, and over the objections of the extremists who tend to run his party, Wilson appointed fellow moderate Republican State Senator John Seymour to fill the seat until this election, whose win-

Robert Scheer, a reporter for the Los Angeles Times, is author of Thinking Tuna Fish, Talking Death (Noonday), essays on the pornography of power.

ner in November will serve out the two years left on Wilson's term. Seymour has tried his darndest to adopt primitive positions, but the right-wingers see through such born-again shenanigans. Although a practicing Catholic who was once publicly against abortion, he is pro-choice, so what else do they need to know? Nor does it seem to help him with that crowd that he got a "bad" rating from the League of Conservation Voters.

Seymour has a good lead over his main opponent in the Republican primary, a homophobic nut by the name of William Dannemeyer, who was an early proponent of the "God's judgment" view of AIDS. Representative Dannemeyer also invented scientific evidence that the disease was spread by spores in the air, thereby necessitating mass internment of patients.

The Democratic competition for Seymour's seat comes from State Controller Gray Davis, Jerry Brown's former chief of staff, and ex-San Francisco Mayor Dianne Feinstein. These two political heavies evidently picked the unexpired two-year term because they thought it would be a shoo-in, neglecting to consult each other's ambitions. Davis was considered the more liberal until he did the despicable: Desperate in the closing days of a losing campaign, he ran a TV ad showing the white truck driver being beaten during the riot, with a voiceover condemning "mob violence." Feinstein, the more conservative of the two, is the front-runner because of her superior fundraising contacts and because of her statewide name identification as the Democratic candidate who lost to Wilson. She also has considerable support among women, which she does not fully deserve.

Davis has by far the stronger record on feminist issues and calls himself, with some justification, "the best feminist in the race." Feinstein pointedly ignored such concerns during her years trying to be as conservative as possible and still get elected in San Francisco. Having long held ambitions to statewide office, she has faced the tricky balancing act of trying to survive in her hometown while maintaining credibility in places like Orange County. This year she chose to come out of the closet as a result of the feminist clout demonstrated in the Illinois and Pennsylvania primaries. Her main pitch is not on the controversial economic and social issues affecting women but rather on the male dominance of the Senate, necessitating her election. One of her favorite lines is "2 percent may be O.K. for milk, but it isn't for the U.S. Senate." This neo-feminist concern does not, in either candidate's posturing, extend to welfare mothers and their children, whose income would be cut by 25 percent under a constitutional initiative put on the November ballot by Wilson, who bought the necessary million signatures with big money from big lobbyists.

Since more than 60 percent of the people living in what is now called the riot-impacted area of Los Angeles are on welfare, cutting payments would not seem to be very helpful to the Rebuild L.A. campaign. But it is not clear that any of the candidates, except perhaps Boxer, care the least bit about rebuilding that or any other urban area. Even Boxer, who is generally bold and on-target, has avoided much identification with the issue. A Maxine Waters she is not. The problem is, none of the candidates have had anything profound to say about the big event. The only center for anything around here

is the riot. Everything else, and certainly the stillborn Senate races, is prehistory.

If I want to get exercised by ahistorical possibilities I'll man one of those thousands of tables for Ross Perot, who is, for better or worse, the only live candidate for any office out here. Perot is everywhere, with an army of volunteers who sneer at the more conventional efforts. The latest *L.A. Times* poll has Perot beating Bush in conservative Orange County by a 42 to 36 percent margin. This is the place that gave Reagan and Bush their largest margins of victory, in the past three elections, of any county in the nation.

But it is not just conservative Californians, those many good-time Charlies whose financial bubble has burst, who are turning to Perot. Both in Oregon and here, Jerry Brown saw a lot of his rebellious energy siphoned off by the billionaire. The point is that the people don't like politics as it is being practiced, and carefully cultivated distinctions among Democrats, conservatives, liberals and Republicans just don't excite them anymore. Nor do the obvious issues that have so dominated our recent politics.

Think of it: Ross Perot is sweeping the conservative precincts while refusing to play the stock social agenda of hate and divisiveness that fueled the Republicans this past decade. Let Dannemeyer gay-bash and yell about the fetus; let Levine flex his patriotic and pro-cop muscles. Not Perot, who admits he opposed the Gulf War, who lectured David Frost about religious tolerance for homosexuality, who favors a crash research program on AIDS and who expresses utter contempt for Willie Horton-type ads. And anyone who tells me there is something uniquely horrible about Perot's buying his way into the presidency hasn't taken a close look at American politics lately. As I have been saying, that's all that the California Senate race is about. Even Boxer, by far the most principled of the bunch, is a front-runner only because of her ability to raise funds.

There is far more grass-roots volunteer activity in the Perot campaign in California than in all of the twelve Senate campaigns combined. And at least he's not forever positioning himself. Which may be why, as the Senate candidates complain, the voters want to hear more from Perot while ignoring their own carefully cultivated campaigns. Oddly enough, the guy with the most money and appeal does not seem packaged. □

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

Strange Jews

TED SOLOTAROFF

MR. MANI. By A.B. Yehoshua. Translated by Hillel Halkin. Doubleday. 368 pp. \$22.50.

There has been an apparent disjunction in the writings of A.B. Yehoshua, Israel's pre-eminent novelist, between the Jews in his fiction and the ideological position that he defends in his political essays. An eloquent spokesman for classical Zionism, as distinct from the military/religious revisionism that has been in the saddle for the past two decades, Yehoshua argues that a Jew can best lead a normal, coherent and challenging life in Israel, and that the Diaspora is essentially a neurotic solution to the identity conflict between the Jews as a people (like any other) and as the Chosen People (like no other). In America, for example, the secular and the orthodox stay out of each other's hair by ignoring the identity problem, one that Israelis confront every day, thanks to the West Bank settlements, and in Jerusalem twice on Shabbat, thanks to the growing number and influence of the men in black suits. The Diaspora Jews pay for their evasiveness, through a weakening of identity and the consequent mounting losses to assimilation. The Jews of Israel, Yehoshua argues, can make this problem an opportunity by instituting religious reforms that would "expose the commandments to the complexities of life"—that is, to those of a national life. This would be the first step in naturalizing Judaism, as it were, in its modern homeland, which would enable its citizens to preserve their heritage while becoming a people like any other.

Given this position, which Yehoshua develops with much subtlety and power, as well as with all his mind and heart, it is surprising, to say the least, to find that his novels and stories might as well be set in Islip as in Israel. Far from representing Israelis struggling with the religious-secular split, his characters seem oblivious of it. And far from even indicating the greater reality, security, normality and fulfillment that is there to be grappled for in Israel, they are typically delud-

ed, anxious, strange and frustrated, and remain so.

His first novel, *The Lover*, is built around an obsessive quest by a wealthy auto shop owner to find his wife's lover (who disappeared during the Yom Kippur War) so that he can leave her, as well as around his relationship with a young education-starved Arab employee whom he eventually sends back home, to a village where the boy's love of classical Hebrew poetry will hardly thrive. *A Late Divorce* conducts the reader through several wings of a dysfunctional family and its victims. The unhappy marriage of Ruth and Yehudah Kaminka culminates in her stabbing him, which leads her to be com-

Mr. Mani suggests the coordinating element between Yehoshua's Zionist ideology and his fertile imagination.

mitted and him to immigrate to America. They produced one son who cannot consummate his marriage, another son who is nastily driving his married lover around the bend and a daughter who is completely dominated by her boorish husband. Containing several overtones of *The Sound and the Fury*, the Kaminkas of Jerusalem and Haifa are most reminiscent of the Compsons of Jefferson, Mississippi, in their mixture of haplessness and cruelty. Yehoshua's last novel, *Five Seasons*, is a brilliantly observed but monotonously unyielding account of the blind failures of a middle-aged accountant to free himself from his state of arrested adolescent love for his dead wife.

In the stories collected in *The Continuing Silence of a Poet*, the psychological and moral weather in Israel doesn't improve. An old widower and lapsed poet is stuck with a late-born retarded son who struggles to emulate him. Two stumped graduate students fill in dead time, one by vindictively baby-sitting the son of her former teenage heartthrob, the other by minding a forest that he allows to be burned down by an Arab whose tongue

has been cut out. An old schoolteacher who has seen too many of his students sent away to die in battle is informed that his son, from whom he is alienated, has fallen; though this proves to be a mistake, his mournfulness continues. A convalescing engineer destroys the love letters sent to his daughter by a soldier, and then runs him over with a car. And so on. These stories are finely, intricately written, but they read like a Zionist's jaundiced view of the Diaspora. What is Yehoshua's right hand doing that his left seemingly knows not of?

One of the interests of *Mr. Mani*, Yehoshua's most ambitious, visionary and powerful novel, is that it suggests the coordinating element between his Zionist ideology and his fertile imagination of slow, family disaster. It does so by bringing the Diaspora into this chronicle of a bizarrely fated family and by steeping it in modern Jewish history—the first time he has done either in his fiction. In order to interpret its meaning, I shall have to turn the novel around and begin where it ends. The narrative moves backward in time through five intense conversations about the Mani family, four by outsiders, each involving the climactic events in the life of the firstborn Mani of his generation, in which he acts out a strange proclivity for self-destruction. Each is related by an overwrought witness and sometimes an accomplice, whether intentional or inadvertent, to the deed. The relationship of the teller to the auditor has its own tensions and implications: A disillusioned S.S. misfit speaks to his Bismarck of a mother, an effete physician to his Zionist father, etc. Since the responses of the listeners are omitted and their sense supplied by the reader, Yehoshua gets a high degree of reader involvement and narrative voltage that steps up the current running through each of the tales. Further, his use of recurrent details and actions (a black overcoat, forms of binding, identification with Arabs, among many others) in the different accounts creates a sense of destiny working like yeast in the lives of the Manis, much as a recurrent place, a telltale garment, family trickery is used in *Genesis* to the same end. All of which becomes overpowering, luminous and mysterious in the final tale, the climax of the climaxes.

The teller is Avraham Mani, a Salonika spice merchant and unordained rabbi, who has just returned from Jerusalem,

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where his son, Yosef, was killed soon after his marriage. The time is 1848, the place an inn in Athens. His auditor is Flora Molkho, the aunt of Yosef's young widow; also in the room is Flora's venerable husband and Avraham's beloved mentor, the renowned Rabbi Shabbetai Haddaya, who has suffered a severe stroke that has left him paralyzed and speechless. In a voice that mingles Judaic learning, Levantine culture, mercantile worldliness, family passion—the voice, that is, of the Sephardic Diaspora (I'm told that the Hebrew original is linguistically amazing, and Hillel Halkin's translation is certainly remarkable), the first Mr. Mani relates the strange events leading up to and away from his son's death that implicate Doña Flora and, with mounting hysteria and despair, himself.

Many years before, when Avraham was a lesser disciple of Rabbi Haddaya and a recent widower, the rabbi had proposed him as a husband to the beautiful Flora; she refused the ardent merchant rabbi but accepted Rabbi Haddaya despite his advanced years. Some years later Avraham sent Yosef to study with the rabbi, and Doña Flora, an upright woman but a childless and often lonely one, doted on the handsome teenager, as did the rabbi, allowing him the run of the household, including their bed when the venerable authority was on one of his frequent trips. Doña Flora also arranged Yosef's marriage to her niece, Tamara, who much resembles her. As Avraham insinuates, with oscillating reverence and rage toward Doña Flora, this resemblance proved to be the undoing of the marriage, at least as far as consummating it; pining for the distant Doña Flora, the unhinged young bridegroom could only give himself to his *idée fixe*: that the Arabs of Palestine are really Jews who have not yet awakened to their true identity, which it was his task to bring about through instruction and, if necessary, chastisement.

Though Avraham had intended only to visit the young couple in Jerusalem, he stayed on to try to save his son's marriage by bringing it to fruition and the young man's life by following him during his reckless forays into the Arab quarter. He relates to Doña Flora that he was successful only in the first task and could not prevent Yosef from running amok on the steps of the Dome of the Rock, where he was stabbed to death by the guards. Then, after she leaves the room, he confesses to the rapidly sinking rabbi that the marriage remained unconsummated, that

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he himself is the father of the infant Mani, and worse . . .

And I, my master and teacher, was outside the gate, I was watching from afar while listening to the distant bell of a lost flock, silently, wretchedly waiting for the worst of the night to wear itself out and the morning star to appear in the east, faint and longed-for, so that I might go to him, to the far pole of his terror and sorrow, whether as his slaughterer or whether as the slaughterer's inspector, and release him from his earthly bonds. . . .

We are meant to know which he is from having listened to the tale as well as to the teller. While confessing to the rabbi and asking for judgment as to whether he should kill himself (" 'Twould take but a nod"), Avraham has been loosening the garments and diaper in which the paralyzed old man is swaddled. The motif of unbinding evokes the Akeda, the binding of Isaac. The name and act of the speaker and perpetrator, the four suicidal actions in the preceding sections and the details (such as the lost flock) in this passage, which foretell details of the family destiny to follow from the sins of the father: All of this completes the revelation that this Abraham has slain his firstborn son. At least, so I read it.

Political Zionist that he is, Yehoshua regards Judaism as playing a large part in the abnormality of the Jewish people. In one of his polemical essays he points out that it is God the father who gives birth to his chosen people and bestows their homeland through Abraham, a foreigner. Instead, then, of the normal development of a people who have become such by inhabiting their homeland, the Jews owe all to their father figure, which goes to prove his absolute singularity as well as theirs. Yehoshua goes on to argue that Yahweh's command to destroy the people of Canaan stems from Judaism's strongly felt need to fundamentally impair a more natural relation with the motherland: the reiterative warning not to "defile the land," the hostility of the prophets to the cult of the earth, the deferral of the return until the Messiah comes are further examples of the compulsion to assert the supremacy of the father not only over the children of Israel but also to proscribe a normal bond among them. And since the collective identity of the Jewish people is intensely masculine (ask any Jewish woman), the obsession with defiling the land, etc., bespeaks the mother of complexes

in the Judaic psyche. Yehoshua infers from this analysis a kind of primal rationale for the Jews remaining in Golah, or exile, for 2,000 years: keeping the son away from the mother and under the exclusive sway of the father.

To Yehoshua, disturbed family relations and their surrogates are emblematic of the condition of the Jews.

All of this is a directional arrow pointing to the connection between Yehoshua's Zionism and his fiction: That is, disturbed family relations and their surrogates are emblematic of the condition of the Jewish people, whether in the Diaspora or Israel. Thus marital distress, generational conflict and child neglect tend to be staples of Yehoshua's fiction—the disordered home life at least partly standing for the still-to-be-achieved homeland. Read in this way, a realistic novel like *A Late Divorce* takes on strong parabolic overtones: The elderly Kaminka, a *yored* (Israeli émigré), returns from America to get a divorce from his wife because he has fathered a child. His wife suffers from a dual personality, and his two sons, one hysterical, the other cynical, are both sexually impaired. By the end of the novel there are double meanings everywhere.

In *Mr. Mani*, the disorder takes the form of the manias (in Hebrew, *manya*) incorporated into the family name. Unable to receive a judgment from his rabbi, who had died, Avraham lived on for a number of tormented years, ending as a rabbi and cantor in Mesopotamia, as we learn from one of the biographical sketches that follow as well as precede each tale. This, of course, is the original home of his biblical namesake, the primal seedbearer. Avraham Mani's obsession with his son's seed is also meant to further the association that freights him and his descendants with resonating significance: that is, another Jerusalem family that is the bearer of the Jewish vertigo, as Harold Rosenberg called it, and in this case through the past hundred years.

Three of the four tales of self-destructiveness in *Mr. Mani* are set in the context of epochal events in mod-

ern Jewish history. Dr. Moses Mani, Avraham's surviving son, meets the occasion of his destiny at the Third Zionist Congress in the person of a beautiful young Polish woman, a redhead like his mother and great-aunt. An obstetrician and a dandy, he has a mania for women; the Zionist congress is merely a place to interest dowagers in his clinic in Jerusalem, which he has made into a mirrored shrine to the eternal feminine. His devouring passion for Linka Shapiro is strangely abetted by her enervated brother (just as Yosef's for Doña Flora was by her aged husband), until taking her back to Poland from Jerusalem leads to the consummation of Dr. Moses Mani's even deeper devotion: "The only hope is the maggot," as Avraham puts it.

Yosef, Moses's son, is obsessed with the politics of the Ottoman Empire; his particular calling, like his uncle Yosef's, is to straighten out the Arabs of Palestine toward the end of World War I, when the British have arrived to drive out the Turks and change things utterly. His *idée fixe* is that the Arabs must be prepared for statehood because a competing state will now surely come to pass in this land. A crack interpreter for the British Army, Yosef spies for the Turks in order to have access to his uncomprehending pupils, and more or less arranges for himself to be captured and convicted of treason by the British (there is a quasi-legal British passport in the family—one of the many instruments of its destiny) so that he can give his most electrifying speech before he is hanged.

The bizarre machinations of this Levantine café prophet are related by his military prosecutor, Lieutenant Ivor Stephen Horowitz, who is about as culturally distant from him as Westminster Abbey is from the Wailing Wall, particularly since Horowitz is relating it to a newly arrived judge and war hero he takes for granted is anti-Semitic. (However, since almost everything is connected in this cunning mosaic of irony inlaid with family and tribal déjà vu, Horowitz's mother is Sephardic, and two of the previous Manis were pets of the British consulate.) Along with being a superb rendition of Anglo-Jewish anxiety, Horowitz's tale is charged, as are the others, by the power of the Manis to make each of the witnesses who tell their tale into accomplices of their singular destiny, even revenants of their genetic nightmare of guilt and atonement, beginning with Avraham of his Arab-dazed son's.

Behind the deadly antics of these fo-

lies à deux that give the novel much of its pace and spin lies a thesis: namely, that the Manis, like the Jews of Yehoshua's polemical essays, are responsible for their own fate. In "The Constant Shadow of War," an essay on the Palestinian conflict, he writes:

I sometimes ask myself whether the obduracy of this conflict perhaps derives from the deep roots of that ancient struggle between the Jews and the world. And can it be that secretly we Jews fear the termination of this conflict? For then we will finally find ourselves at the beginning of a harmonious, or at least essentially normal, relationship with the world. Do the Jews really want simply to be happy? wondered Hermann Cohen. . . . By this question, no less and perhaps even more than by all his philosophy, he expressed a distinctly Jewish sensibility. For the Jew fears that something essential to his identity will be lost if he stands in a normal relationship with the world.

The acid test for this thesis, as for the novel, is the Holocaust, which finds Yosef Mani, who has been spared from being hanged as a traitor, on the island of Crete, along with his son, daughter-in-law and grandson. Faced with the banality of Jewish collaboration but committed by his story itself to it, Yehoshua comes up with a narrative strategy almost as startling as the climactic one: The witness and accomplice is the S.S. medic, a devotee of Hellenism, who captures the Manis in the ruins of King Minos's palatial labyrinth, where they have the guide and trinkets concession. And labyrinthine become the relations between Private Egon Bruner and Yosef and Efrayim Mani, which include the binding and death of Yosef as a hostage and a renunciation by both Egon and Efrayim of their respective identities that have brought them to this juncture—though their respective guilt then insures that the will of the Manis, like that of the Führer, be done.

The only half-conversation that is less than riveting is, unfortunately, the first one, in which another lovely young redhead tells her mother of her encounter with the suicidal father of her lover. At this point, we are in contemporary Israel, and the self-destructive demon in the Mani blood has become a ghost of itself, a kind of *Schadenfreude* in the otherwise sober makeup of Judge Gavriel Mani, who eventually even manages to resist the lure of dangerous Arab towns. Otherwise, the family's enigmatic paternalism toward the Arabs is left to dangle just at the point in history when something even

more rich and strange and illuminative could be made of it.

But if the opening section is problematic, the rest of *Mr. Mani* is a marvel. Yehoshua has set himself the task of narrating one hundred years of suicide in a way that is both coherent and unexpected. Except for García Márquez's *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, I can't think of a recent novel whose technique is such a tour de force of re-created suspense and enfolding pattern. Such books set the

novel back fifty or seventy-five years—to the era of Faulkner, Conrad and Forster, when innovations in narrative form and voice and the detection of destiny, the perennial subject of great fiction, went hand in hand. At the same time, *Mr. Mani* is an original and daring re-envisioning of the Zionist view of Judaism, and melds the two sides of Yehoshua's career into an achievement that has international significance. The Nobel Prize has been given for less. □

Who's a Jew?

MURRAY POLNER

SAVING REMNANTS: Feeling Jewish in America. By Sara Bershtel and Allen Graubard. Free Press. 333 pp. \$24.95.

Ten years ago Sara Bershtel and Allen Graubard set out to investigate unaffiliated American Jews and learn "what being Jewish meant to them" and "what part it played in their lives." The majority of Jews in this country shun synagogue membership, avoid Jewish organizations like the plague, rarely visit Israel, turn their backs on religious tradition and know little or nothing about, say, Maimonides, the Musar movement or Leviticus.

Those who dismiss unaffiliated Jews and their concerns remind me of Milton Berle's wisecrack when he was asked about Oscar Levant's alleged conversion to Christian Science: "Our loss is their loss." But in truth they aren't "our loss" or "our gain," or so Bershtel and Graubard imply in their fascinating and revealing book. While the unaffiliated disdain formal ties to organized Jewry's maze of committees, congresses and federations, its endless fundraising and overly cautious politics, many nonetheless continue to search for some genuine connection to Judaism. Some seek spiritual or ethnic solace, but they also have a maddening plethora of other reasons. They cannot always define their need, but in the context of unparalleled freedom of choice and an overpowering secular culture, what is emerging, the authors note, is less a "successful resurgence of Judaism" than its "transformation

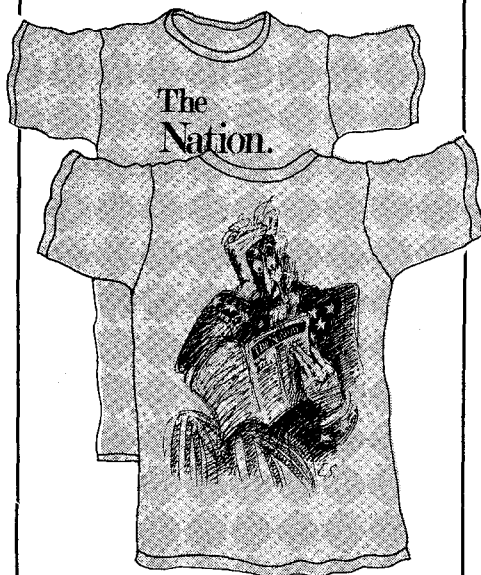
into just another option for modern individuals constructing their identities in a post-assimilation culture."

This was quite evident to me during the nearly two decades I edited a Jewish-oriented magazine. Time and again I encountered people like the ones Bershtel and Graubard interviewed—people who felt Jewish and wanted their children to be Jewish but could not agree on what that meant or tell you why they felt as they did. Some identified with a particular religious practice such as *havurahs*, or religious fellowships; some with New Age tendencies, or perhaps with sentiments derived from their parents and grandparents. Mainly, though, they tended to associate their *interpretation* of Judaism with ethical and moral behavior arising from some vague sense of the Prophetic tradition or, more likely, from nineteenth- and twentieth-century social and economic movements.

And there was always Israel, at least after the Six Day War in 1967, when "I am a Jew" consciousness, however vicarious, soared. Tens of thousands of Moshe-Dayan-as-Superman posters were sold, and in spite of the fact that Jews seemed to be disproportionately opposed to the Vietnam War, many otherwise pacific Jews I knew took enormous pride in learning that pro-war people were quoted as saying that we needed the tough Israelis to smash the Vietcong. From passive ghetto dwellers to commandos with Uzis in one generation! How sweet it was, especially from so great a distance from the battlefield. As false as those emotions now seem, what was crucial, at least for American Jews with no ties to organized Jewry or to Orthodoxy, was the instinctive fear that Israel, and perhaps Jews elsewhere, were at risk—the same emotion felt by many leftist and liberal Jews when they reluctantly supported the Gulf War.

Murray Polner was the editor of *Present Tense*. He wrote *Rabbi in America: The American Experience* (Holt, Rinehart & Winston) and edited the recently published *Jewish Profiles* (Jason Aronson Inc.).

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After 1967 came the revival: Thoroughly acculturated Jews suddenly rediscovered their faith or ethnicity. Jewish studies courses took off in colleges and universities and scholarship about the American Jewish experience grew more professional and sophisticated. The Holocaust, until then largely ignored, became a rich area of examination. Orthodoxy, once deemed to be faltering, flourished, while Jewish neoconservatives preached the gospel of self-interest and power.

Then, too, other signs of renewal began sprouting. Female scholars and writers began challenging the status quo as never before. Despite some opposition, gay synagogues were established on both coasts. Adult education courses and New Age ashrams and conferences drew large numbers of the unaffiliated attracted by Jewish mysticism, spirituality and inner healing. Everyone, it seemed, wanted to be "Jewish."

Reform Jewry's Rabbi Alexander Schindler's famous warning that a viable American Jewish life could not be built on a "kidney machine" of Israel and the Holocaust, and skepticism about the depth and significance of the "revival" from various critics, went unheeded. Instead, the ubiquitous fundraisers pushed their versions of the "We Are One!" post-1967 slogan and tried to present a fictional portrait of a monolithic "American Jewish community," associating the fate of Israel, whatever its policies, with the well-being of America's Jews.

All the more reason to welcome *Saving Remnants*, which centers on a series of interviews with baby boomers who "came of age in the postwar period of acceptance and integration" of American Jews and have therefore "defined their Jewish identity in the context of American social and cultural history rather than . . . the immigrant experience." Their generation has never been scarred by religious discrimination, hounded by persecutors or threatened by a major anti-Semitic enemy. Having rejected the Judaism of their parents, these third- and fourth-generation men and women have intermarried, entered nearly every occupational field and live wherever they choose and with whom ever they wish. In short, they are indistinguishable from other white Americans of their class, except that they are far more liberal politically.

Several years ago Charles Hoffman, an Israeli sociologist and journalist, questioned third- and fourth-generation Jews in this country over a three-year period and concluded that they were not ob-

sessed with Israel, the Holocaust, intermarriage or anti-Semitism, important as some of those issues may be. What was crucial, reported Hoffman, was exactly what Bershtel and Graubard discuss at length: "None of the givens of Jewish life in that past America [when anti-Jewish sentiments were high and Jews were still poor immigrants] still obtain: not a given community, not a given faith, not even a given enemy. The Jews are not *encountering* modern America; they *are* modern America." The gimmicks relied on by organized Jewry—condemning assimilation (they really mean acculturation) and intermarriage, raising false fears of rising anti-Semitism and supporting everything Israel does—haven't much appeal for many Jews under 45.

What does attract them, though, is unclear. The people interviewed by Bershtel and Graubard have great difficulty explaining why it is important to them, and especially their children, to remain Jewish. Few of the respondents have any detailed knowledge of religious texts, history or literature, or wish to learn about them except in a superficial manner. What Bershtel and Graubard uncover in these people is an amorphous jumble of feelings derived from our general and American Jewish culture, together with a few memories they hope to pass on to their children. This hardly makes for a revival, though it does indicate that a small, growing portion of the population is intent on fashioning forms of Jewish life that emphasize variety and personal predilection, though without much attention to Judaic knowledge.

A novelist tells the authors that "in some crazy way, not formally, I've come to feel intensely Jewish." Yet he allows his children to have a Christmas tree and an Easter celebration (they also celebrate Hanukkah), though "the resurrection of Christ we stayed away from." He also tries to instill a sense of being a Jew in his kids by saying, as they emerge from the family automobile, "All right, Jews, pile out." A film production manager, an avowedly "paranoid and proud" post-'67 Jew and self-described liberal, bought a rifle for the defense of his family. A journalist draws sustenance from his identification with the past: dead Yiddish-language journalists who once worked and debated on New York's Lower East Side. A former activist in Students for a Democratic Society fashions a nonreligious bar mitzvah for her sons. Yet despite the best of intentions this ethnic

mishmash has little or no effect on their secular, thoroughly American daily lives, note the authors, not by way of censure but rather as an explanation. Freedom of choice and opportunity have fashioned another sort of Jew, they write. No, we aren't one; we're everything from anarchists to Zionists. And the tenets the unaffiliated profess to live by, however much of a hodgepodge they seem to be, are a good illustration of what "choice" has come to mean for American Jews.

But is there a good working definition of who is a Jew? Is it faith in God, observance of the daily rituals, concern about Israel or attempts to apply the teachings of the Torah and Talmud to

contemporary life? It depends on whom you ask. In Arthur Hertzberg's iconoclastic new collection of essays, *Jewish Polemics* (Columbia), he offers this definition: "In all its authentic versions, even at its most secular, Judaism is the faith of those who are dissatisfied with the society around them and have a critical sense of the hollowness of worldly success—and only through such people can Judaism survive, or have reason for survival." I'm not sure that Sara Bershtel and Allen Graubard or many of the people they interviewed would disagree, but if they do, they can pick and choose from a long list of other definitions. Or make up their own. □

Please, Mr. Postman

JOANNE JACOBSON

THE SELECTED LETTERS OF HENRY ADAMS. Edited by Ernest Samuels. Harvard University. 587 pp. \$29.95.

It is tempting to dismiss as anachronisms both Henry Adams, an epitome of his type, the genteel bigot; and the letter, an artifact of the drawing room and the study, of the era before the telephone. Private, plotting, the letter seems the perfect medium for Adams to have turned to in privileged alienation: "I am much flattered if regarded as bric-à-brac of a style,—dix-huitième by preference, rather than early Victorian," he wrote with stubborn pleasure to Henry James in 1909. Through correspondence Adams could simultaneously vent his frustration with the changes wrought by the rise of industrial capitalism, in which he saw his own disempowerment, and work to sustain the viability of a community aligned with the old order: "Society is a totally disintegrated crowd. Here, as at Washington, I have no life," he complained from Paris to his English friend Charles Milnes Gaskell in 1910, and then continued, "This does not prevent my seeing a good many people, and writing a good many letters. . . ."

Yet if his posture of resistance to change fixes the narrowness of Henry Adams's loyalties, it also reveals the broader, even timely, implications of his letters. The let-

ters demonstrate the extent to which such "literary" issues as authorship and audience remain almost inevitably rooted in conflicts over power. In them loyalty and community were charged with quite specific and specifically political interests, even as a threatened elite sought to portray these interests as transcendent values under siege by mass culture. This is the first one-volume edition of Adams's letters, culled from the comprehensive but daunting six-volume edition published during the 1980s. One might wish sometimes for a more critical attitude toward Adams on the editor's part—grouping the last letters under the heading "The Benevolent Sage," for example, rubs many bitter yet essential edges off Adams—but Ernest Samuels has performed a valuable service in making Adams's letters accessible for the first time to a large audience. For these letters are compelling and important: Poised at the boundary between literary and nonliterary, Adams's correspondence dramatizes the role of the letter in the management of transition and, more generally, the complicity of language and literature in the consolidation of elite cultural control in the turn-of-the-century United States.

His closeness to leadership and to privilege gave Henry Adams unique advantages as an informant. His letters witnessed on a nearly daily basis events over the sixty tumultuous years from 1858 through his death in 1918. From Sicily in 1860, on European tour after his college graduation, Adams observed Garibaldi's entrance into Palermo; as private secretary to his father, Charles Francis Adams, he observed, first from

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Joanne Jacobson teaches in the English Department at Yeshiva University. Her book *Authority and Alliance in the Letters of Henry Adams* will be published by the University of Wisconsin Press this fall.

EMERGENCY ROOM (Turnpike, Anywhere, U.S.A.)

The patient coffee machine urinates
endless specimens into little white cups
for tasters who find
something indeed is terribly wrong,
but never remember to send their reports to doctors
who could, perhaps, treat the condition.

The big soft drinker in the corner
is obsessed with her female operation.
She keeps saying to herself and anyone who will listen,
"They took everything out. I just feel so *empty*."
The experienced leave her alone, but the innocent
come up to her, offer warm conversational coin,
but expect something in return,
some womanly soothing for their *own* needs.
She only repeats her one statement, ". . . SO EMPTY."
until they feel like kicking her.
Some of them do.

The normally hot-blooded soup is stiff from chill,
the iceberg lettuce salad is limp from fever.
Side by side in their bins,
passing the time by chatting away,
they think they may suffer from the same disorder.
"I don't feel at all like myself." "You do look awful."
"They let us sit here all day without any attention."
"Maybe an icepack would help you."
"You've got to keep yourself good and warm."
"It's obviously something going around."
"I hear it's a regular epidemic."

Left on a table to die, a sandwich
can hardly believe this has happened to him.
Having heard it said so often about
his friends and neighbors, he still never expected
his own epitaph to be:
"They opened him up, took one look,
and just closed him up again."

In an adjoining section sufferers can see
disjointed bits of medical training taking place.
A long, nearly unmoving queue of them
suggests that primarily women, these days,
wish to be surgeons.
Each comes out, after what must have been
a long, laborious scrub,
looking annoyed, holding her dripping hands
well away from body and shoulderbag,
shaking them violently to dry in the air,
since the snappers-on of the rubber gloves
must be practicing someplace else.

The male trainees shoot expeditiously in and out
of another door behind which must be required
only the briefest demonstration
of some minor but useful skill—
perhaps of assuming the look of dignified relief
and self-satisfaction,
the look that is still on the face of each when he exits,
that, when he's fully qualified, announces
to waiting relatives from far down the hall
"Yes, a-a-ah yes,
everything came out well."

Mona Van Duyn

Washington, the Congressional debates leading up to Secession and then from London, the progress of the Civil War and British flirtation with the Confederacy. When he settled in Washington after the war Adams was active as a reform journalist, and later he and his wife criticized political life in the capital from the vantage point of their well-known salon, in the self-conscious tradition of European court correspondence. "Shall I imitate H.[orace] W.[alpole] and tell you about this Court; a pack of boobies and scoundrels who have all the vices of H.W.'s time, with none of its wit and refinement?" Adams wrote about the Grant White House to Gaskell in 1869. If his wife's 1885 suicide set Adams excruciatingly adrift, it also made him increasingly dependent on correspondence, and his claims of "posthumous" numbness were belied by the responsiveness and care he invested—for decades—in writing letters from the South Seas, Japan, Paris, provincial France, the western United States and an astonishing range of other places all over the globe. Keenly tuned to the rhythms of modernization, Adams explored in his letters the displays of technology and nationalism at the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 and the Paris International Exposition of 1900, and charted in them the rise of the United States as an imperial power (from the elbow of his intimate friend John Hay, who served as Secretary of State under McKinley) and the shifting European power relations that led progressively to world war: "I apprehend for the next hundred years an ultimate, colossal, cosmic collapse; but not on any of our old lines," he pronounced in decisive judgment in a 1902 letter to his younger brother Brooks.

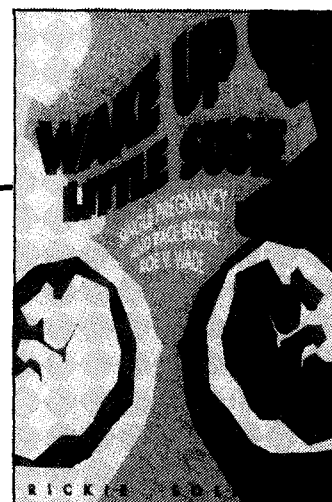
The proximity and sensitivity to power that gave many of Adams's letters lasting interest and credibility also set a more personally interested agenda for his correspondence. He was hardly a neutral observer, and his letters were hardly innocent carriers of information. Adams's relentless anti-Semitism speaks with ugly clarity to his mastery of the form as an agent of exclusion and of elite retrenchment: "The atmosphere really has become a Jew atmosphere. It is curious and evidently good for some people, but it isolates me. I do not know the language, and my friends are as ignorant as I," Adams complained to Gaskell in 1914, fixing harshly and without explanation on "Jews" as the locus of his unease with change. Adams's letters to correspond-

ents like Gaskell, Hay and Henry James restricted access to him to a set of readers whose sympathy he clearly counted on, emphasizing correspondents' common experience in distinct contrast to that of an emergent, presumably alien, popular audience: "The painful truth is that all of my New England generation, counting the half-century, 1820-1870, were in actual fact only one mind and nature; the individual was a facet of Boston," Adams admitted to Henry James in 1903, after reading James's *William Wetmore Story and His Friends*; and he added, in confidence, "The essential superficiality of Story and all the rest, you have made painfully clear to us, but not, I think, to the family or the public." Insular and defensive, Adams's letters simultaneously salvaged community and shaped it to his own needs. "We or our friends have canvassed creation, and there are but a dozen or two companions in it;—men and women, I mean, whom you like to have about you, and whose society is an active pleasure," he wrote to Hay in 1882. In heightening friendship in such selective ways, Adams rallied his correspondents as private collaborators against a public whom his own words had rendered threatening; and ultimately, in doing so, he managed to render intimacy subversive.

If, then, Adams's letters dramatize his loyalty to a set of friends whom he asked to answer—literally—his loneliness, they also dramatize the extent to which he was able to use correspondence as an instrument of embattled partisanship. Adams recognized in correspondence the opportunity to sustain an alternative to the marketplace and thus not only to preserve a set of genteel values but, equally important, to sustain a set of genteel prerogatives rooted in privacy and silence. His letters actively reinforced their status by coding meaning, not only in the simple form of nicknames (Hay, for instance, became "Sweet heart" in joking reference to their private club, the Five of Hearts) but also in the more complex form of appeals to readers' appreciation of language as a medium of pleasure rather than as a means of transmitting necessary information. Adams loaded his sentences with privately shared meaning to be unpacked at leisure: When he wrote to Elizabeth Sherman Cameron in 1898 that "winter has come down on us this time like a howling herd of office-seekers," his distaste for mass politics was at least as much at issue as news of the changing seasons. Linguistic sophistication accrued in such letters a ritual value much like that of objects within pre-

industrial societies that honored common bonds, rather than calling up a price on an economic market. Henry Adams's lifelong reservations about publication—neither of his novels, *Democracy and Esther*, appeared under his own name, and the first printings of both *Mont Saint Michel and Chartres* and *The Education of Henry Adams* were private—dramatize even more plainly his determination to evade obligation to a mass audience and to the literary marketplace: "I am quite sure that whatever my fellow-men say about it, or think they ought to say about it, both they and my fellow-women . . . will like me better for not being on sale," Adams sniffed to Brooks in 1905 in defense of his refusal to publish *Mont Saint Michel and Chartres*. Located in an essentially premarket exchange economy, the letter was ideally suited to Adams's effort both to resist the commodification of language and to sustain writing as a domain of privilege belonging to the gentleman amateur.

Adams's attempt to maintain control through correspondence over the conditions of writing dramatizes, finally, the territoriality of the form for him during a period in which many cultural conflicts were played out in territorial terms. Frederick Law Olmsted's Central Park remains visible testimony to the politics of space in the nineteenth-century United States, to the elite imperative of defusing the city's potential for disorder and of containing difference; Coney Island testifies, in turn, to mass resistance to containment. Equally, literary realism's insistence on vernacular language and subject matter engaged it in a cultural turf battle—and if, in contrast, Henry Adams used the letter to hold at bay democratic intrusions, in doing so he nevertheless acted very much in keeping with realism's commitment to sustaining during transition the social viability of writing and the status of the writer. During his final years, isolated by a series of debilitating strokes and by the death of close friends, Adams clung with painful insistence to letter writing even as the letters themselves frequently devolved into rhythmic litanies of aloneness: "I've no more to say, and no one to abuse. I cannot conceive that anyone will ever take any interest in me, or in anything that interests me," he wrote in 1912 to Bernhard Berenson; and in 1915 he warned a Yale English instructor who had written to him, "To us old people, the universe resolves itself into an effort of the Ego to maintain an illusion of continuity, which is to be solved very soon by disease, senility or death." Such



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letters dramatize Adams's resentful withdrawal, yet they also evidence his recognition of language as a means of engagement. For, perhaps most of all, to write letters meant for Adams to defend territory; to keep writing, to resist closure. Correspondence's unending rhythm of dialogue guaranteed Adams the conditions of authorship and the audience he sought, summoning from him the language that would be his resource against silence and insuring the survival of an arena within which he could count on responsive readers.

A virtual obligation of literacy, the letter has generally fallen between the critical cracks. With real business to attend to in the world, the form has seemed easy to take for granted and the letter writer has, in turn, seemed an innocent or at least a reliable narrator. Women's reliance on correspondence further underlines the letter's marginality as a literary form; yet it also underlines the form's ability to meet diverse needs for territory and control. If Henry Adams's reluctance to publish was, unlike many women's, plainly rooted in privilege, like them he was aware that the letter's ambiguous literary status made it amenable to negotiating the power relations of gender and class, which are protected by a lack of explicit and publicly sanctioned language. In this negotiation the letter served fundamentally political imperatives for Adams. Correspondence provided him with access to an exchange economy in a society aggressively committing itself to capitalist growth and even with an alternative to the authorial model of private ownership. Yet while correspondence sustained his refusal to make bourgeois compromises it also worked actively—and with strategically calculated skill—on behalf of Adams's own interests in a preindustrial power hierarchy of which he was a direct beneficiary. □

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Dance Is a Moral Question

JOAN UNGARO

PRODIGAL SON: Dancing for Balanchine in a World of Pain and Magic. By Edward Villella with Larry Kaplan. Simon and Schuster. 317 pp. \$23.

In 1958 Mickey Mantle, Sugar Ray Robinson, Dick Button and Edward Villella all appeared on a TV special hosted by Gene Kelly called *Dancing Is a Man's Game*. "Kelly's point was to draw a parallel between the physicality and grace of dancers and athletes," Villella remembers in his book, *Prodigal Son*. He doesn't belabor the point that for a man in the United States in 1958 to make the career choice of ballet dancer was highly improbable. Then in his second season with the New York City Ballet (N.Y.C.B.), Villella was soon to become America's most celebrated male dancer. Eighteen seasons with N.Y.C.B. followed, until in the spring of 1975, after he performed to great acclaim at a state dinner in the White House, Villella's hip finally gave out. Despite the crippling pain, he managed to take a curtain call and then to jitterbug with Betty Ford, but in his words, "One day I had been a world-class dancer and the next I was an invalid." Within ten years the "invalid" became the founding artistic director of the Miami City Ballet, a company he envisioned "not as a New York City Ballet South" but as "an opportunity to pass on Balanchine's legacy, not only the ballets themselves but the elements necessary for performing them, the approach to technique, to phrasing, and to music."

Those elements and that approach are not so easy to articulate, especially for a dancer, who is necessarily nonverbal. Yet Villella's book is a remarkable testament. The first sentence of *Prodigal Son* reads, "By my count, this is at least the fifth book written by a New York City Ballet dancer about George Balanchine." Villella's autobiography, his life story, is about George Balanchine? Well, it is and it isn't. As for other dancers' books, he's right. Most came out after Balanchine died in 1983; some are already out of print. They include Suzanne Farrell's recent *Holding On to the Air* (1991), Gelsey Kirkland's *Dancing on My Grave* (1986), Merrill Ashley's *Dancing With Balanchine* (1984; written with Larry Kaplan,

Joan Ungaro is a director who writes mainly about the theater for Theater Week.

who worked on Villella's book as well) and Peter Martins's *Far From Denmark* (1982). In *Prodigal Son*, Villella expresses his link with Balanchine in very personal terms: "I feel a profound debt to Balanchine's ballets. They are directly responsible for making me more of a dancer than I would ever have been without them. . . . They took care of me, now I am taking care of them."

This caretaker recounts his background in amusing detail. He was born in Queens in 1936. His older sister, Carol, took dance lessons in the neighborhood. When Villella got beat up playing on the street, his mother made him go with them for dance lessons. He didn't want any of his friends to know, so "on lesson days, I wore my baseball uniform and cap and brought along my mitt and bat. I entered the ballet school by walking backward up the two flights of stairs so that it would look as if I were leaving the building to play baseball." When his sister got a partial scholarship to the School of American Ballet (S.A.B.), his mother mentioned that her 10-year-old son could dance too. He was summoned to S.A.B. and immediately given a full scholarship. To his surprise, he liked it there. "I thought the place would be loaded with snobs, but I was wrong." Men at S.A.B. in those days were in short supply. Many were World War II vets on the G.I. Bill—guys like Robert Joffrey and Gerald Arpino. Villella's parents insisted that he stop dancing at 16 and go to college, but by senior year at Maritime College at Fort Schuyler in the Bronx, already the school's welterweight boxing champ with a varsity baseball letter, he was "ready to go back to George Balanchine." Villella was accepted back at S.A.B. instantly.

He auditioned for the N.Y.C.B. soon after, but the company was embarking on a ten-week tour and couldn't hire him until it returned. Villella didn't know what to do—he needed a job. When Lincoln Kirstein (then and for forty years the N.Y.C.B.'s general manager) heard about this, he asked Villella how much he would need to live on for those ten weeks. Thirty-five dollars a week, Villella said, and Kirstein immediately wrote him a personal check for \$350. Much later in the book Villella says that after his hip gave out and he had no means of earning a living, he continued to receive his N.Y.C.B. paycheck for years. "That kind of magnanimous gesture was typical of the attitude

of the company toward its dancers, and it sustained me during the most difficult days of my life."

In the fall of 1957, as a new corps member of N.Y.C.B., Vilella had to learn fourteen roles in two weeks' time. He notes that "life in the company is not about dancing twice a week, or twice a month, as it is in many European and Soviet companies. It's about dancing eight times a week, dancing more than forty roles a year. A New York City Ballet dancer had to be prepared for this and hold up his end of the bargain." Part of the bargain was—and is—working twelve-to fourteen-hour days six days a week the whole season long. Vilella says he was not happy to learn that "dancers were paid a fifth of what show business performers were earning" in those days. Although "the company has always paid above the union minimum," as a principal dancer, "my yearly salary never exceeded \$25,000." So much for the financial incentives for being a ballet star.

In *Prodigal Son*, he carefully details his life in class, in rehearsal and in performance, onstage and off, matters of interest mostly to those who have felt the power of his presence onstage—but that includes a lot of us. Unfortunately there is no complete chronology of his roles, but dances Vilella is still closely associated with include *Prodigal Son*, the "Rubies" section of *Jewels*, Oberon in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Harlequinade* and *Tarantella*, all by Balanchine, and Jerome Robbins's *Dances at a Gathering*. All but the first were choreographed for Vilella. Balanchine's *Prodigal Son* was choreographed first in 1929 as a Diaghilev vehicle for Serge Lifar; he revived it in 1950, when Robbins and Maria Tallchief danced it, and decided to revive it again in 1959 with Vilella. B.H. Haggin, a dance critic of the day, asked, "Why are you putting Vilella in such a major role? He's just a kid," and Balanchine apparently replied, "Well, Vilella, you know, he looks like nice Jewish boy." The next season, Vilella says, Balanchine said, "This is your ballet. I stage it this time. Next time you stage. I'm never going to stage it again." That remark comes from 1960; in one of the many good photos in *Prodigal Son*, Vilella demonstrates the role to a Miami City Ballet dancer some thirty years later.

While the details of the key roles Vilella danced are carefully explained in this book, it is more than just a dancer's manual. It is within a larger context that *Prodigal Son* is most impressive. Vilella elaborates on two rather broad simple

statements: "I think of ballet as an art form that has lost its conscience" and "Balanchine ballets are an endangered species." Both allude to the oft-quoted Balanchine comment, "La danse, c'est une question morale." Thus the strength of *Prodigal Son* lies in both its intended and unintended manifestations of the moral fervor Balanchine implied and communicated in his work to the dancers and the viewers. Lincoln Kirstein, in "A Ballet Master's Belief," a succinct twenty-page essay written the year after his colleague of fifty years died (now collected along with a variety of other clear and impressive pieces in a newly published Lincoln Kirstein reader, *By With To & From*), writes, "Only after Balanchine's death does his moral rigor seem definable, although it had long been visible. What he lived, taught, and invented ballet by was a constant employment of traditional guidelines for considerate behavior." Vilella recalls that Balanchine said, "The only people you should work for are Picasso, Stravinsky, and Cocteau." . . . Aside from himself, he meant. I saw at once the kind of religious order he was talking about." And Bernard Taper's biography of Balanchine notes that "the rehearsal studio of a ballet company is something of a cross between a convent and a prizefight gym."

Edward Vilella himself seems the very personification of that combination.

The conventional assessment is that Balanchine, whose maxim was "Ballet is woman," was a "ladies' man." He had four wives, all major ballerinas of their respective times, and numerous attachments to the leading female dancers in his company. But while many of the dances he made—425 in all, according to the official catalogue—were inspired by or created for the women in his life, much of his legacy is carried on by his male dancers, who now serve as heads of various dance companies and institutions across the land. Among his former dancers in New York, Peter Martins heads the N.Y.C.B., Arthur Mitchell has the Dance Theatre of Harlem, which he started in 1969, and Jacques d'Amboise runs the National Dance Institute he began in 1976. In San Francisco, Helgi Tomasson is head of the San Francisco Ballet; in Chicago, Daniel Duell has Ballet Chicago; The Pennsylvania Ballet is now under Christopher d'Amboise, earlier under Richard Weiss; Patricia Wilde heads the Pittsburgh Ballet; Francia Russell and Kent Stowell, Pacific Northwest; Todd Bolender, the State Ballet of Missouri; and Edward Vilella the Miami City Ballet. It seems that Gene Kelly was right after all—dancing is a man's game. □

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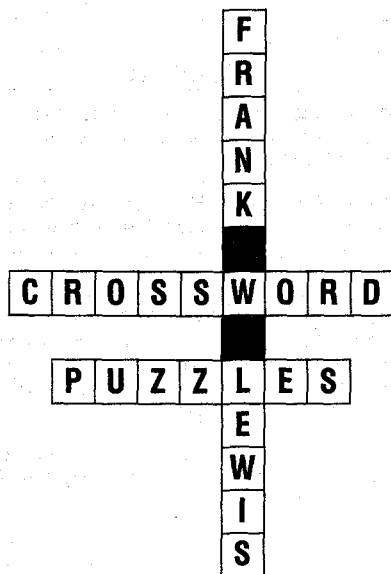
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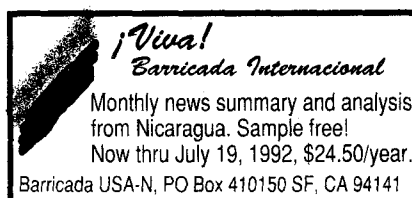
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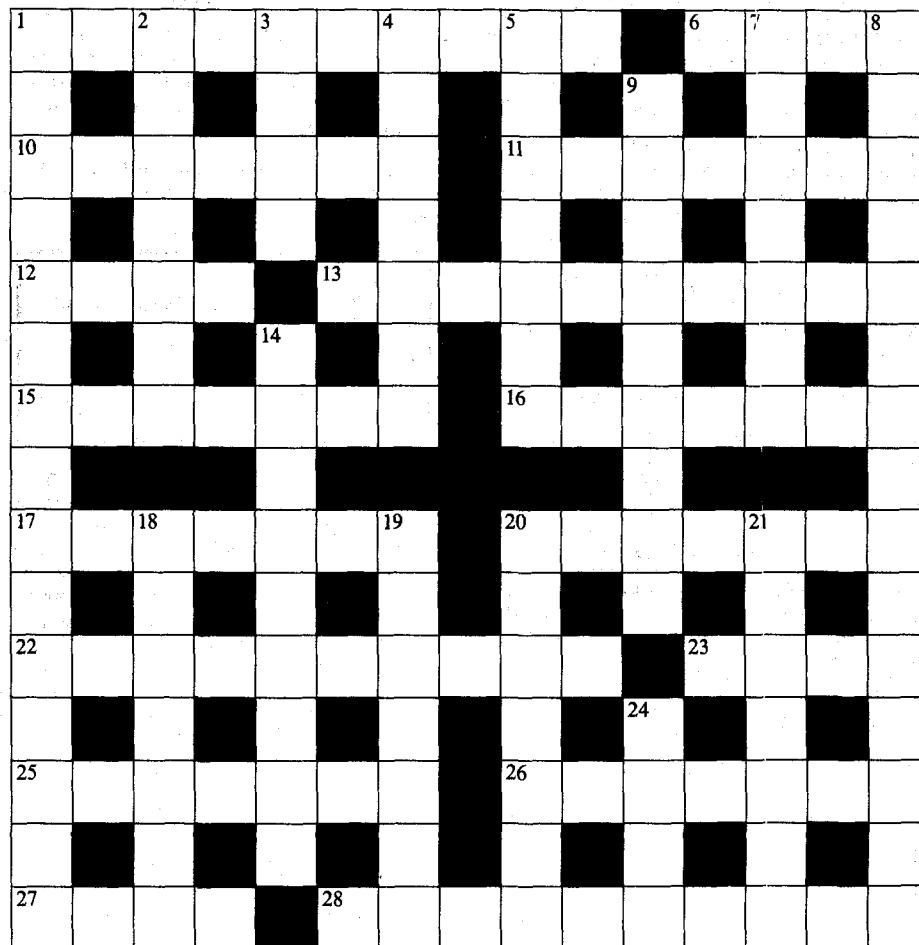
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L	R	E	L	A	S	R	S						
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S	S	N	P	S	N	T	A						
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G	P	E	A	A	I	T	U						
O	B	O	I	S	T	S	D	E	S	P	A	I	R
D	F	S	T	E	T	T	E						
S	O	F	T	P	E	R	S	I	S	T	E	R	S

Crossword Puzzle No. 2387

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

- 1 and 6 Where they don't usually throw away the shell, despite the implication. (10,4)
- 10 Let room be made though it sounds rather shaky when this is applied. (7)
- 11 In part, outre, a clear example of syrupy concoction. (7)
- 12 A mild panic caused by one of those things which might be put down when landing? (4)
- 13 In our time it might be shortened to be read like a public notice. (4,6)
- 15 In case you find a louse, of a sort, in a series of falls? (7)
- 16 Was his subject "Smiling" after a fashion? (2,5)
- 17 Having a good deal of fondness for trouble at the "squared circle." (7)
- 20 Act at an organized performance of a Bach presentation, perhaps. (7)
- 22 Personal trouble, in the main, might justify their oversight. (4,6)
- 23 Rather lively snooper around the capital of Russia. (4)
- 25 Teeth may get so, when temporary setbacks occur. (7)
- 26 When the moon is cloudy, toward the East it will be in bad odor. (7)
- 27 To be prolific, make contact on the way back. (4)
- 28 It might take some cabbage, as they say, to make us a true ark. (10)

DOWN

- 1 By which one might read it is not real buoyant? (10,5)
- 2 Frenzied women have a bad name, and end up sort of sad. (7)
- 3 Is it sometimes termed high? No, go down and up with it! (4)
- 4 Does it involve a countermove to beat one so badly? (7)
- 5 What the most prolific dealer did to competitors—certainly no ins, nor young. (7)
- 7 Heep had plenty of it, but a loud beginning would make it work. (7)
- 8 Does it involve defrosting in the microwave where there might be some running at first? (11,4)
- 9 Those of you who fill in the answers in pencil, having good erasers, could be doing it some day, firmly intending to do so. (9)
- 14 I've a great way of making it mark with different colors! (9)
- 18 and 24 It may be a gamble on the gridiron to get something from a close friend this way. (7,4)
- 19 Moses, for example, might prove only relative. (7)
- 20 If you want rhythm, accede to change a point in it! (7)
- 21 The old thing could hold its wine, but added a little measure to the current dance! (7)
- 24 See 18 down

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